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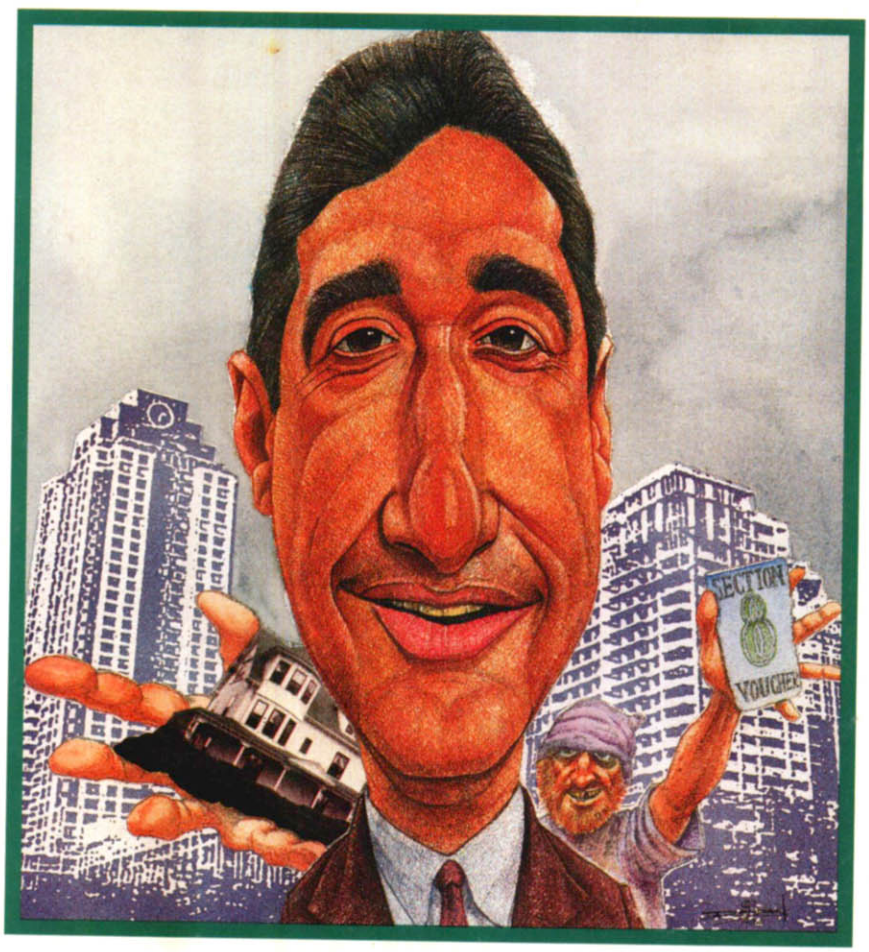

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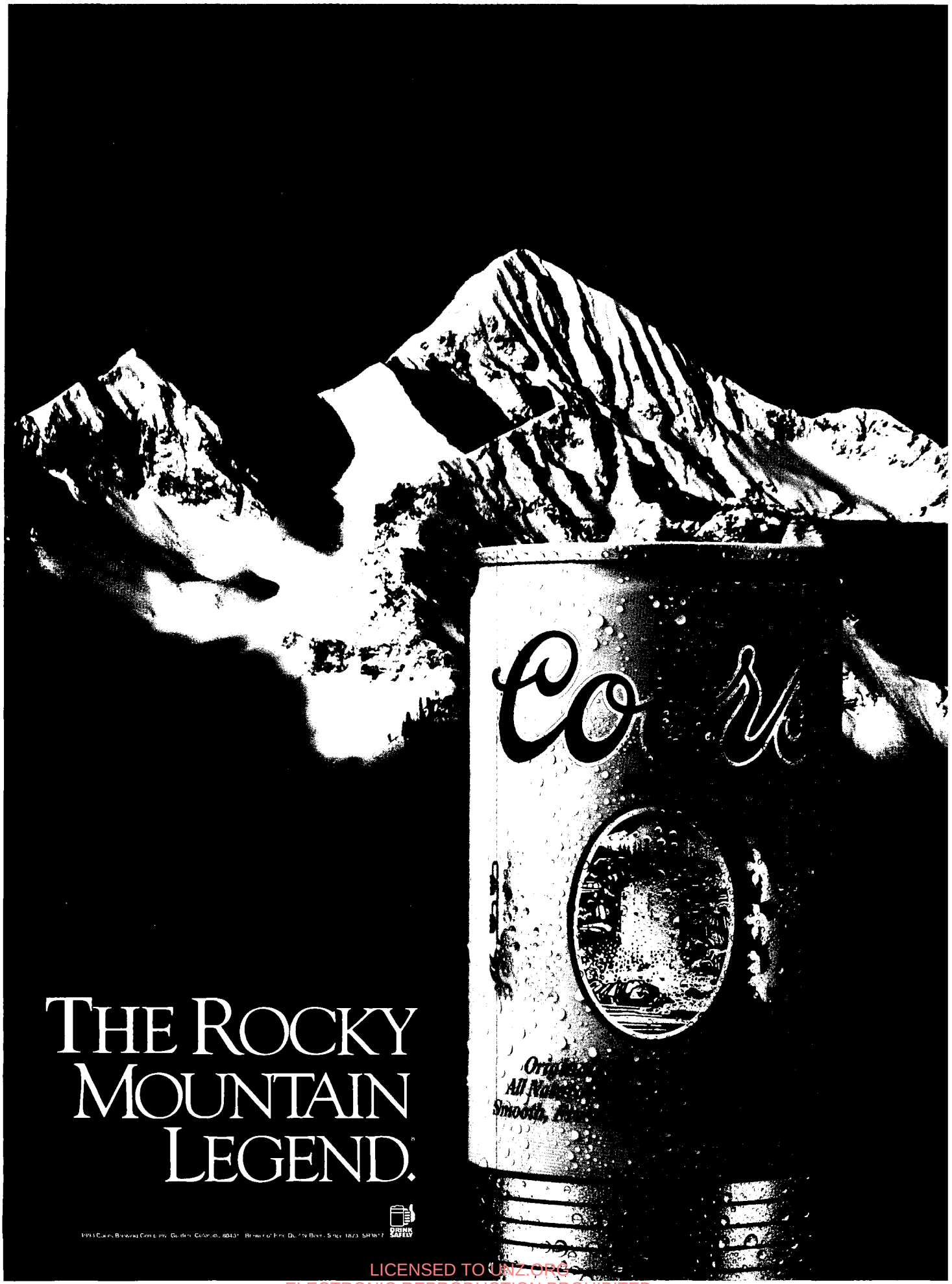

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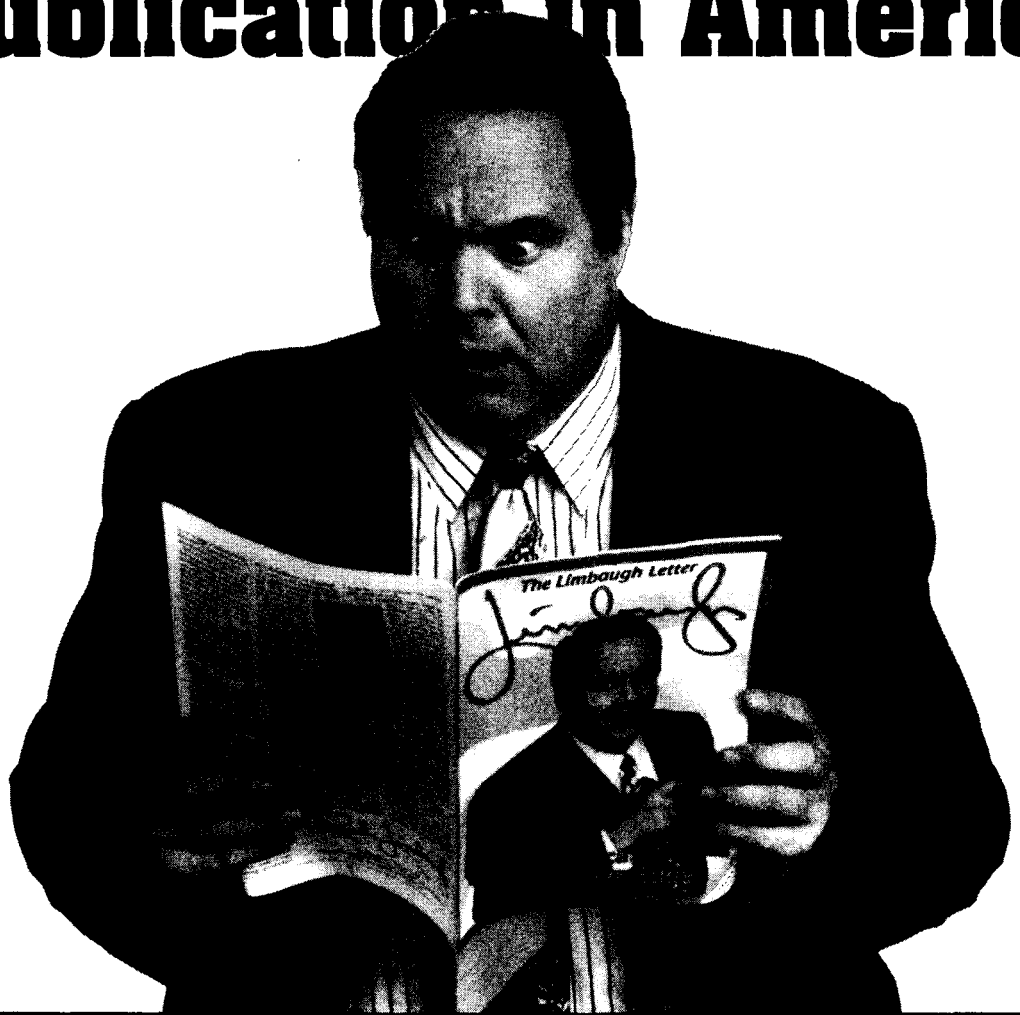

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ABOUT THIS MONTH

by

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

WHEN DID I KNOW it was really over for Bill? On health care, at least, it was on Friday, July 22, when the greatest anchor of them all, Peter Jennings, made reference to "what the consequences of bad reform might be for all of us in the country." How's that again? *Bad* reform? In television parlance it was an utterance so heretical, it brought to mind what a Soviet comrade once said to rebut some point or other I'd made that strayed from the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, "*Eto teoreticheski nevozmozhno*"—theory makes it impossible! But like the Democratic leadership that took the health care portfolio away from Clinton the previous night, Jennings evidently understands that the man has become a huge political liability to progressive forces at home and abroad. Of course, no one bothered (read: dared) to tell Hillary that the jig was up, nor even to wonder what she was doing out in Portland organizing a bus caravan on behalf of a health package concocted by the Senate Finance Committee. It's the best example I've seen of what in Washington is known as a "disconnect."

THEN CAME THE WEEKEND—and I assumed Bill if nothing else would be grappling with the unimaginable tragedy of Rwanda. Instead, he showed up stag and in a star-spangled tie at yet another of his high-school reunions, crying over classmates killed in Vietnam, hugging the survivors, singing Karaoke-style renditions of come-hither-sounding "Runaround Sue" and "Stand by Me" (though not that other Excelsior oldie, "Hey, Paula"), ridiculing the upcoming Whitewater hearings, and staying up till four playing hearts. It's good Bill's not letting sleep detract from his valuable presidential time. (See page 82.)

BILL IS SAD WHEN HE loses, and after seeing his name erased from health care he barely found the strength to utter a few lame words of self-approval. Such simpering recalled another unhappy time. As a *New Yorker* article earlier this year described Bill Clinton, circa 1981:

> An acquaintance said, "After Bill lost, it was pathetic." Recalling Clinton's early efforts to reintroduce himself to voters, this person continued: "It seemed as if you might find him, almost any hour of the day or night, at this supermarket out on Markham—he'd catch you at the end of the aisle, or he'd be waiting at the register and he'd say, 'You know, I used to be governor and . . .' "

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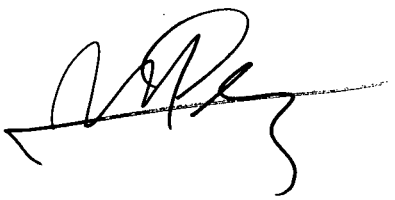

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• If judged by the Armey standard, which holds that Mr. Clinton is delighted with any bad news so long as "he is never found guilty of a criminal act," July was another great month for our president, the eighteenth such in succession. He was cheered when special counsel Robert Fiske declared the death of long-time Clinton friend Vincent Foster a suicide at least six months in the making. It didn't matter that Fiske's report linked Clinton in a major way to the "Travel Office" scandal. The president braved an endless barrage from the swelling ranks of the right-wing press. The Associated Press, for instance, discovered the workings of a $400,000 slush fund going back to Clinton's days of innocence in Arkansas. (Spiro Agnew resigned over less.) The *Washington Post* reported that fixer Bruce Lindsey has been making calls to stewardesses who served aboard Clinton's '92 campaign plane, warning them not to go public with Clinton's more memorable airborne come-ons, such as "Oh, I could get lost in those blue eyes" or "You don't know what that outfit does for me." (Presumably the outfit in question wasn't a Donna Karan.) The *New York Times* reported that Tyson chicken attorney and Clinton pal James Blair put the muzzle on Madison renegade Jim McDougal during the '92 campaign, and that Clinton's secretary of the Navy has an even more dubious S&L past than McDougal. *Time* magazine described how chicken magnate Don Tyson called in his chips within days of the inauguration last year to force Clinton agriculture secretary Mike Espy to bully Puerto Rico into becoming a dumping ground for Tyson dark meat. The *Washington Post* (again) reported that Treasury strongmen Lloyd Bentsen and Robert Altman apparently lied regarding the date and number of their Whitewater-related meetings and White House contacts. The *New York Times* (again) reported that Clinton himself had approached the U.S. comptroller of the currency Eugene Ludwig last New Year for advice on Whitewater. Clinton lost his famous temper over that ethical lapse—but not at himself. As he informed the *Boston Globe*, he promptly told the comptroller, "Gene, forget about it, you shouldn't even talk to me about this." Now you understand why he gets away with everything?

• But then there's the world, and it's no more taken with Clinton than with cholera. Haiti became an escape from Rwanda, and by month's end the administration's official policy toward our tiny neighbor in the Caribbean had undergone so many permutations that *New York* writer Jacob Weisberg termed Clinton's latest position a "re-re-reversal" of his initial one. The Boy Statesman traveled to Riga, Warsaw, Naples, and Berlin. Among those openly contemptuous of Clinton internationally were U.S. dependent Boris Yeltsin, the aging and ailing François Mitterrand, U.S. puppet in Panama Guillermo Endara, and the murderous Kim Il-Sung, who for lack of a serious opponent on the world stage upped and died. This sad expiry of Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter's new-found friend led Clinton to express his condolences to the people of North Korea—when he should have been sending them shiploads of Kleenex, given the unprecedented outpouring of tearful grief Kim's death precipitated in a land that has yet to sample the soft comforts of tissue paper. Alas for Kim's brainwashed masses, Arkansas is not a major producer of Kleenex.

• The Democratic Party's commitment to its own crime package was questioned when *Roll Call* reported that not a single U.S. congressman is currently doing time in a hoosegow, not even on the weekend. But there was good news for the Chicago police: for the first time since 1968, the Democrats in 1996 will hold their national convention in the Windy City. Senate majority leader George Mitchell's hopes of becoming commissioner of baseball have come to naught, thanks to a veto reportedly exercised by Texas Rangers managing partner George W. Bush, as payback for the shabby way Mitchell treated Bush senior a few years ago. It would be dandier still if George W., who is running for governor against the unspeakable Ann Richards, were also motivated by Mitchell's 1989 sabotaging of the capital gains tax cut, a defeat the Bush White House unknowingly never recovered from.

• At first some thought it was a prop planted by Nina Totenberg for the opening night of *Unquestioned Integrity*, Mame Hunt's re-creation of the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings currently playing at Washington's Studio Theatre Secondstage. But no, the women's panties pulled out of his pocket by Judiciary Committee member Sen. Howell Heflin when he reached for a handkerchief during lunch in the Dirksen Senate cafeteria are said to be his wife's. That's not the word in Tokyo, however, where 23-year-old Ken Tanaka is a suspect in ten cases that have seen young women robbed of their panties at knife-

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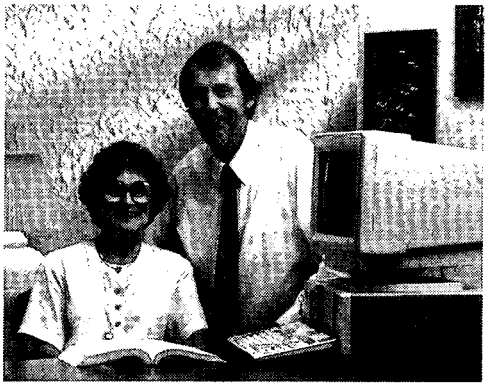
point. None of the stolen property has been recovered. Nor have any of the 2,160 golf balls shot into the Tokyo Bay by an unidentified 43-year-old local truckdriver unhappy with teeing off inside the city's cramped driving ranges, which anywhere else would double as handball courts. He's been charged with an environmental crime. The regulatory state is also cracking down on Japan's sumo wrestlers, whose association has banned silicon scalp implants, which is too bad since implants anywhere else on a sumo body would be superfluous.

• Health care nationalization seemed deader than DOA. One of Clinton's more compelling points in hawking guaranteed insurance for everyone was that "if you go to jail, you have it." At the Charleston, West Virginia city jail, that coverage evidently includes full dental—convicted armed robber Robert D. Shepard remained at large after scaling an 18-foot wall on a makeshift rope constructed from dental floss. A Gallup poll found that a solid majority of Americans of all stripes feel that O.J. Simpson has been treated fairly by the judicial system so far, a view that's subject to appeal on the grounds that respondents were already familiar with the facts of the case when approached by pollsters. According to a television analyst, one in every four American homes tuned in to watch the first day of the Simpson hearings, which is surely getting it backward, now that every self-reliant American household owns at least four television sets.

• Even while the Shoemaker-Levy comet blasted into Jupiter, the star of Hillary Clinton continued to rise and shine and attract imitators. Accompanying her diminutive husband into Gaza, Mrs. Suha Arafat caused a stir when with the daring of Jeanne d'Arc she declared, "No, I will not wear the veil," whereupon a number of Gazans dubbed her Hillary Tawil Arafat (Tawil being the Arabic for Rodham). In Poland, our Hillary was on her best behavior, even if heavily under the influence of Wyborowa, a local commodity. Turning up the charm, she said she wished she had as many children as Mrs. Walesa—the first time in recorded memory that a member of Wellesley's Class of '69 has ever had anything nice to say about a woman with eight children. A Polish women's magazine lauded Hillary for giving "gathered journalists and press photographers much less cause for sarcasm than her husband did," and found her "at her most elegant" at the official dinner thrown by President Walesa. "It seemed the only thing that gave the graceful Mrs. Clinton any problem was getting in and out of the presidential limousine," the magazine said. Something to do with its "low-slung chassis." What was that about sarcasm?

• Rush Limbaugh and his faithful remained under siege from all the usual reliable sources—Anthony Lewis, Howard Kurtz, Ellen Hume, NOW, FAIR, FOUL, even Thomas Boswell—who nonetheless were outclassed by free associationist Garry Trudeau. "What's the difference between Limbaugh and the 'Hindenburg'?" a *Doonesbury* joke began. Answer: "One's a flaming Nazi gasbag; the other's just a dirigible." (How is it, then, that the only American standing near the Reichstag this month and shouting—in German, no less—was Bill Clinton?) Meanwhile, in a big step toward nationalized Orange Juice, the Florida Citrus Commission severed ties with Limbaugh, effective mid-August. As they say on the Imus show, "That O.J. will kill you!" —*WP*



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CORRESPONDENCE

A Hiss Is Still a Hiss

Both Tony Hiss in *Newsweek* and John Corry in *The American Spectator* ("Presswatch: The Hiss Factor," *TAS*, July 1994) have speculated about why President Nixon wrote to the Russians in 1991 to ask whether they would release records of Alger Hiss's espionage. Tony Hiss suggested, laughably, that this was because RN himself now doubted Hiss's guilt. Corry correctly guessed that RN was indulging intellectual curiosity—although it was my curiosity, not his own, because I proposed and carried out the inquiry, on behalf of the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda. Nixon never wrote any such letter, which *Newsweek* could have ascertained with a telephone call.

When I suggested making the request, the former President's only reaction was to speculate that, in the event the Russians produced any documents, Hiss's tireless apologists would find a way to discount them. Once again, Nixon was right. As Corry noted, when Hiss's name popped up in the archives of the Hungarian secret police, the mainstream media paid little attention. Whether this has to do with the media's interest in covering up for Hiss, their wish to avoid vindicating Nixon, or the alarming sense of cognitive dissonance brought on by the whole subject, I leave to expert observers such as John Corry to determine.

—John H. Taylor, Director
The Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace
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The Eternal Nixon

I shall always love Ben Stein for his beautiful, poignantly eloquent tribute to Richard Nixon ("*Au Revoir*, Mr. President," *TAS*, July 1994). May I now add mine? I think of the long years he endured, persevered, and finally overcame his enemies' cold, merciless, and unwarranted persecution, all the while spending his energies toward promoting, protecting and preserving not only America's peace and freedom but that abroad as well.

I think of him and remember Shakespeare's words about cowards dying many times but the valiant only once; about the mighty oak that fell, leaving a lonesome place against the sky, as Sandburg said of Lincoln. I remember RMN and think of Niagara Falls. I think of the present White House occupant and a millpond comes to mind.

—Irene Prater Dell
Carl Junction, Missouri

Of all the kind words I have read about Mr. Nixon since his passing, Mr. Stein's piece was the most elegant. Well done.

—Edward T. Cutter
Maple Shade, New Jersey

To Mr. Stein. a heartfelt *thank you*! It was a beautiful piece, and it needed to be said. You touched my heart. . . . God bless Richard Nixon and his family and God bless you, Mr. Stein.

—David Brown
San Jose, California

Ben Stein said for me all those things I ever thought about Richard Nixon and said them so well I found myself crying all over again. . . .

—Paula Carmen
Henderson, Nevada

Ben Stein has expressed so thoughtfully and beautifully the emotions that millions of admirers and supporters shared during the days following the stroke, and later the death and funeral, of this remarkable statesman, President Richard Nixon.

This event was doubly traumatic because of the death of our beloved First Lady, Pat Nixon, only ten months previously.

—Susan Spreen
Mission Viejo, California

Burn Box Blanks

With "The Clinton-Gore Incinerator" (*TAS*, June 1994), *The American Spectator* fires another shot in its ongoing assault against the First Couple. In this case, however, the *Spectator* shoots blanks by using Waste Technologies Industries (WTI) as its ammunition.

Evan Fitzmaurice, a research assistant who wrote the piece, may be an assistant of something, but it's not research. Fitzmaurice did not contact us at any time either for information or to request an interview. In response to the article's misfires, we submit the following facts:

First, WTI is not located in a residential neighborhood, minority or otherwise. The site has been zoned for industrial activities for at least two generations. Except for the riverside, our immediate neighbors are other industries. Before WTI, a petroleum products company operated a storage facility on the site. Millions of gallons of hazardous materials in 100 percent concentrations were sent to, stored on, and shipped from the same site.

Second, for the umpteenth time, WTI is not the largest incinerator in North America. According to a nationally respected environmental publication, WTI ranks seventh in the United States with respect to capacity for commercial hazardous-waste incinerators.

Third, WTI was designed and is operated by subsidiary companies of Swiss-based Von Roll, a globally respected environmental engineering company, and not "the Swedish incinerator maker" as reported.

Fourth, WTI negotiated its initial contracts directly with representatives of three companies and not with a chemical association lawyer who is now with the U.S. EPA. Market forces brought about a restructuring of our customer base, which currently is under contract for more than 80 percent of our available capacity.

Fifth, a trial burn is not a pass/fail procedure. Environmental regulators can impose, as they did in our case, operational limitations based on preliminary reviews of trial-burn results. These limitations stay in place until regulators complete a more extensive review, which may result in a new set of operating conditions. We have successfully demonstrated compliance with all applicable performance standards for hazardous waste incinerators.

The sixth, and most preposterous, reportage is the machination about the First Lady, a cement company, and the dredging of the Ohio River. While we don't know anything about Mrs. Clinton's alleged dealings with the cement company, we do know that we have not run into any opposition about accepting hazardous waste via trucks, a proven, common, and safe method of transportation.

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(continued on page 73)

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The Company They Keep

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

How many years has it been since a Republican of high estate publicly denounced an opponent as a "pinko," a "parlour pink," or a "one-worlder"? When did you last hear a Republican assail Democrats as the party of "Acid, Amnesty, and Abortion"? It has probably been two decades since such epithets were launched. Now along come the Clintons, the Hon. Vic Fazio (D-Calif.), and other Democrats claiming that their critics represent the "radical right." The Republican Party, the Clintons lament, is falling into the clutches of the "extreme right." Well I, being one of their devoted critics, find their choice slurs quaint. The Clintons are really very old-fashioned.

The "radical right" was a concern to polite progressives back in, say, 1953. The term was indiscriminately applied to the likes of William F. Buckley, Jr. and Gerald L.K. Smith, a bigot whom time has forgotten and quite justifiably. Smith was a mere crank, arsenious in his prejudices but a crank with no more mass appeal than influenza. Admittedly, in the 1950s there was some warrant for resorting to these terms. Not much was known about the renascent conservatism then challenging the long-held certitudes of New Deal liberalism. Persons of goodwill could with some justification lump a Buckley in with isolationists, reactionaries, and the less savory Smith. In fact, the conservatism that Buckley championed was no threat to American constitutional values; but casual observers of the political scene might not have recognized this in the 1950s.

By 1964 the terms "radical right" and "right-wing extremist" had been the subject of sociological studies. Liberals used them to describe supporters of Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. On election day he attracted 27 million such supporters. Given their politeness at the polls and no record that they threatened the civil order thereafter, one can conclude that the liberals' alarm was unwarranted and that the sociology was flawed. Yet throughout the 1960s and 1970s the terms kept being applied to most Americans who dissented from liberal orthodoxy. By the end of the 1970s, I think, all fair-minded observers could conclude that these epithets had become slurs used by political partisans and ignoramuses.

Are the Clintons partisans or ignoramuses? They are both. More than they ever admit, they have dwelt in the provincial world of the liberal ideologue. Such people have over the last two or three decades missed a lot. From 1980 to 1992 the Goldwaterites led by Ronald Reagan and George Bush governed America tolerably well. Human rights were not imperiled. No Reaganite was heard honoring Mussolini, Hitler, or even George Wallace. Actually, the Goldwaterites under Reagan and Bush had opened their party to wayward liberals such as Secretary of Education Bill Bennett and that erstwhile fan of Hubert Humphrey, United States Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. Moreover, Reagan Republicans treated much of liberalism's most plausible legislation as settled conditions of American government. Social Security was left unmolested. The welfare state remained pretty much intact. Old Goldwaterite harangues against foreign aid and negotiating with Communism faded.

Nonetheless, partisan Democrats learned few new rants against conservative Republicans. Oh yes, they complained of Hollywood sleaze, drawing some esoteric distinction, apparently, between the shocking Claudette Colbert and the sleazeless Thomasons and Miss Streisand. And they complained about a Decade of Greed, again drawing some special distinction between leveraged buyouts and bilking the local savings and loan or allowing dubious figures to fork

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times *column syndicated by Creators Syndicate.*

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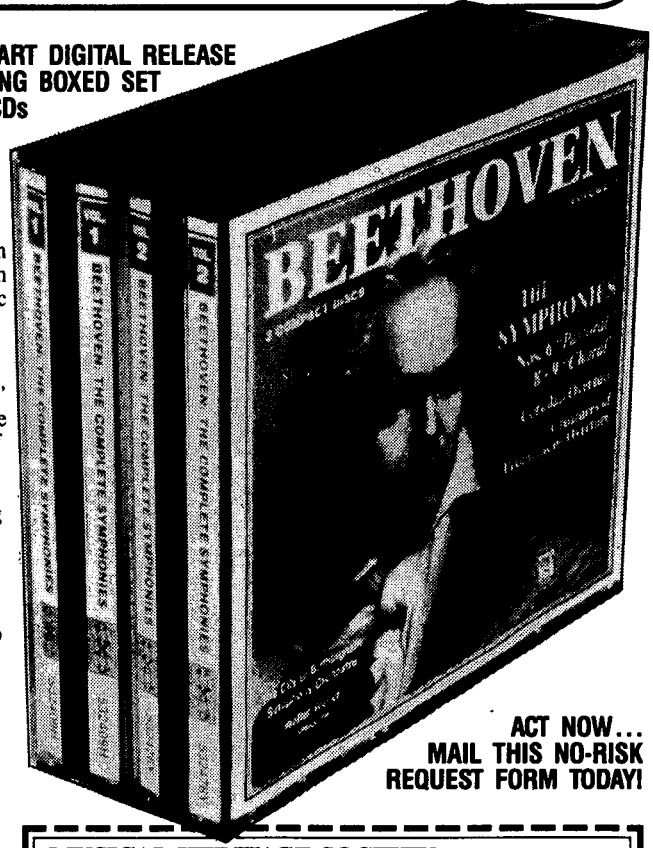

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over $100,000 from mysterious futures trades. But these virtuous Democrats still fretted about the "radical right" and "right-wing extremists." As Reagan's successor campaigned for the presidency in 1988, Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) intoned that "Hitler would have loved these people." The fastidiously liberal columnist Anthony Lewis accused the Republicans variously of "nativism," "McCarthy tactics," and being susceptible to "the extreme right." He had the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page in mind!

Now we have President Clinton and his lovely wife Hillary—the brightest female public servant since Eve—calling critics of their policies right-wing extremists. Even Rush Limbaugh, with a weekly radio audience of 22 million, is numbered among the "radical right." Do Bill and Hillary know the ideological company they keep? Just a couple of months back another public figure was decrying the Republic's "decades-long shift to the extreme right." This critic of conservatism is Aldrich Ames, the highest-ranking CIA official ever convicted of spying for Moscow. He is obviously on the Clintons' wavelength. From 1990 to 1991, he contributed some $5,000 to the Democratic National Committee. All of which reminds me that one has to be pretty far to the left to see Ronald Reagan, George Bush or Rush Limbaugh as "extreme right." ❐

Tit for GATT

The policy of free trade has been a boon for us all. We make our computers with a minimum of intrusions from our government (affirmative action is an abomination!) and ship them wherever there is a market. The French make their wines and ship them to us. American fishermen ship flounder and tuna to Japan. The Japanese tax their citizens to make good and inexpensive cars that are shipped to us. Our automobile industry is forced to compete and today, unlike a decade ago, our automobiles are among the best in the world. Our automobile industry is prosperous. Neither you nor I have to subsidize it. Hurrah for free trade.

Over at the White House, however, under the rubric of free trade, our president is pondering legislation that would hamper free trade and clip American sovereignty. It is "enabling" legislation for tying the American economy to the World Trade Organization. The legislation will be sent to Congress very soon. If it is passed it will put international bureaucrats in control of our economy and eventually in control of much else. As every power freak knows, with the control of the money comes all the control one could possibly want. Over at the United Nations and in such strongholds of international bureaucracy as Brussels and Geneva, there are fat bureaucrats rubbing their palms in delight at the prospect that Bill Clinton is about to hand over to them the American economy.

Already he has handed over to the United Nations control of an injudicious amount of American foreign policy. He has had American military personnel acting in Bosnia as forces not of the United States but of the United Nations. When fifteen Americans died recently from friendly fire in Iraq, Vice President Al Gore condoled families whose sons fought not in the service of the United States but rather according to the Vice President "in the service of the United Nations." As Henry Kissinger is at pains to point out, this administration has an abbreviated view of American sovereignty. Its major figures, the Clintons, Mr. Gore, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, are burdened by the delusion that America's history is an embarrassment.

President Clinton will, then, soon be relinquishing the direction of the American economy to the bureaucrats of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The World Trade Organization was created from the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT. GATT was generally a useful instrument for liberalizing trade as it was used to lower tariffs, allowing Americans to purchase foreign products at a better price even as we gained more opportunities to ship our products abroad. But GATT blew up when ambitious free traders attempted to widen its scope to cover not only trade in goods but trade in services and agriculture. The bureaucrats of GATT did not go into retirement. They set the wheels in motion for the establishment of WTO, and they adjudge it a great improvement on GATT.

Peter Sutherland, director general of GATT and an exuberant international bureaucrat who sees genuine opportunity for himself with WTO, has said, "The old GATT procedure effectively had no ability to impose sanctions on the guilty"—that is to say, a country answering to its citizens or to its own peculiar foreign policy needs. In the 1980s, when the Communist Sandinistas were brutalizing Nicaraguans and threatening to destabilize Central America, we could cut back Nicaragua's sugar quota as we saw fit. We did so notwithstanding GATT judgments against us. We will not be able to operate so freely if Congress passes WTO and yokes us to the 117 and counting other countries that have joined the WTO. "The new system," enthuses Sutherland, "will have an appeals body to rule. . . . The judgment on appeal will have to be accepted. . . . If reports are adopted but not adequately implemented within a reasonable period, sanctions can be imposed upon the recalcitrant country."

There are many fatuities on which the bureaucrats of the WTO base their calculations. One is that bureaucracies are capable of serene, disinterested judgments. Of course, a growing body of economic scholarship tells us that bureaucracies are forever falling into the hands of those whom they would administer. They also develop their own institutional goals, and they grow according to no discipline other than their own self interest. Right now the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are top-heavy bureaucracies sorely out of touch with global needs, for instance the need to revive the economies of the former Soviet empire. The WTO will differ only in that it will have a lot more power.

A more pernicious fatuity undergirding the WTO is the notion that there is an international commonality embracing all the nations of the world. There is not. For instance, some nations are democracies, others are despotisms. In 1989 when the Chinese sent their tanks to massacre Chinese political dissidents, the United States could peacefully demonstrate its displeasure through sanctions. We would have no such latitude under the WTO. Perhaps Bill Clinton would like to relieve himself of the burden of making foreign policy by signing us up for the WTO, but perhaps Congress is more responsible. ❐

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Inflation, Confiscation, and Gold

by Tom Bethell

This month we'll put on our thinking caps and take a look at inflation. Ever since the spring of 1993, when the price of gold began to rise, it has threatened to return. In a matter of months the price rose from $325 to $400 an ounce, then settled back to about $380, where it has remained for the past year. The bond market dropped, with long-term interest rates rising to their November 1992 level. And the dollar has declined sharply. The old folly, that a less valuable dollar can fuel an export boom, remains an article of faith among Democratic policymakers. Markets seem to suspect that Washington is quietly backing a new burst of inflation, while hoping that the bond market doesn't notice.

Inflation steals our savings, upsets economic calculation, punishes bondholders, and bails out debtors. It especially benefits the biggest debtor of all—the government—and can be thought of as government's preferred way of repudiating its debts. "By a continuing process of inflation," Keynes wrote in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace,* "governments can confiscate, secretly and unobserved, an important part of the wealth of their citizens." It has occurred repeatedly throughout history, and should always be attributed to government, which does, after all, monopolize the issue of legal tender. The activities of private-sector counterfeiters are admittedly inflationary, but small scale by comparison with government printing operations, and illegal to boot.

"If we ask why prices have risen almost fourfold since 1971, the nontechnical answer is that the banking system has 'monetized' over $2 trillion in Treasury debt since then," Lewis Lehrman and John Mueller wrote in a recent issue of their *LBMC Report.* "And if we ask why Federal deficits have mushroomed in the meantime, the answer is that our legislators have gotten used to a monetary system which permits public debt to be monetized on such a vast scale."

"Monetizing the debt" works like this. The federal government spends more money than it takes in, as we all know, and it makes up the difference by borrowing money from the private sector and issuing to lenders interest-bearing pieces of paper called bonds. Banks buy them, because they like the interest. Federal Reserve officials then buy back some of these bonds from the banks. With what money? With dollars created *ex nihilo* in the Fed's computers. Perhaps that's why Fed chairman Alan Greenspan has on his desk a plaque proclaiming "The Buck Starts Here," as Bob Woodward tells us in his new book.

Every Thursday the Fed publishes its balance sheet, including details of "U.S. Government securities bought outright." In the next day's *Wall Street Journal* you can read that in the week ending July 6, 1994, for example, the Fed "bought outright" $1.889 billion-worth of government debt. Just in one week. The banks then have this amount of money as new reserves and can use it several times over to make new loans to customers. When the loans are made, bank deposits increase overall, and the "money supply," M1, M2, and so on, increases accordingly. The figures are admittedly hard to interpret. For one thing, the great currency expansion of recent years is not inflationary because it is mostly carried abroad and used as a store of value in countries, such as Russia, where the local currency has already been ruined. But in the U.S., monetization of government debt is the "root cause" of inflation.

For a long time liberals wanted to believe that greedy businessmen raising prices were the true cause of inflation, and that wage and price controls were the solution. This is nothing so much as a rejection of economic thought and the attempt to replace it with police power. It found its worst expression in Nixon's wage and price controls of 1971—economic policymaking at its post–World War II nadir. Its medical equivalent would be the belief that fever causes disease and that the best way to cure it is to tamper with thermometers so that the mercury level can't rise.

Recently we have seen a revival of the nonsensical idea that inflation is caused by people working. "A Surge in Hiring Adds to Concerns on U.S. Inflation," ran a *New York Times* headline on July 9. Think of the economy as a pair of scales with "things" on one side and "money" on the other. With too much money on one side, the scales tip and that's inflation. But people working presumably add to the store of useful things. That should tip the scales the other way (unless they're working for the government). What makes Fed governors think that work causes inflation? Metaphors, such as "overheating." When unemployment is low, workers cease to moderate their wage demands, leading to "wage-push" inflation. It's all nonsense—just one more way of blaming the private sector for the government's irresponsible monetary expansion.

In 1982, a Princeton economist named Alan Blinder attributed the inflation of the 1970s to: bad weather, leading to a "food shock" (rising food prices), followed by an "energy shock"; and to the end of wage and price controls. Then came another "food shock" in 1978-9, then another energy shock. That should have disqualified the man from further consideration as

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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a serious economist. In the same year he told an interviewer that "sympathy for the underdog" was the "fundamental bedrock" of his ideology, and his worldview stemmed from that. "For example," he explained, "greater concern for unemployment rather than inflation." Recently he was confirmed by the Senate as vice chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Such is the world we live in. Readers might want to stock up with a few gold coins.

Nations on the gold standard must conduct their monetary affairs prudently; alert to the possibility that people will express their dissatisfaction by exchanging paper for gold. Gold has a number of vital characteristics, the most important being that governments can't print it and people never throw it away. It is compact, scarce, portable, indestructible, and nice to look at. It was "meant" to play a monetary role, I believe, and it still does. Its price sends a signal that cannot be ignored.

"Gold is a different type of commodity because virtually all of the gold that has ever been produced still exists," Greenspan told Congress in February. "Therefore changes in the level of production have very little effect on the ongoing price, which means that it's virtually wholly a monetary demand phenomenon. . . . It's a store of value measure which has shown a fairly consistent lead on inflation expectations, and has been over the years a reasonably good indicator. It does this better than commodity prices or a lot of other things." Not bad! Paul Volcker would never have said that. Greenspan may not entirely have forgotten his Randian youth.

Historically, inflation has accompanied war because the sovereign becomes a major paymaster. Soldiers must be paid, and it is convenient to pay them with paper and to suspend its convertibility. Its value declines accordingly. Postwar, governments have made the mistake of restoring gold convertibility at its pre-war exchange rate. After the battle of Waterloo, the Britain of Charles Dickens's youth experienced a deflation of unprecedented severity. Prices fell to one-half their 1815 level, debts were magnified, debtors jailed, creditors prospered, and "hard times" gave capitalism a bad name. Following World War I, the British Treasury made the same mistake. This time the error gave gold a bad name.

When governments pay their people with paper money directly, they don't have to go through the Western rigmarole of issuing bonds and then buying them back with computer-originated cash. They can simply print as much money as they want. This is what has happened in Russia since 1990. Russia and other former Soviet lands have cash economies: individual checking accounts and credit cards are all but unknown. People are paid in cash and they are inclined to keep their savings at home. In 1990 I visited Moscow and later wrote (*TAS*, June 1990): "You can now legally exchange one dollar for six rubles, but taxi drivers and risk takers on the streets will give you twelve, and according to an estimate by an economist I met, the [real] market rate is now about 20 to one. Inflation is obviously soaring, and by the end of the year no doubt the figures I have just provided will seem quaint."

Four years later, 2,000 rubles are needed to buy one dollar. The savings of ordinary Russians have been destroyed. Put yourself in the position of a retired Muscovite, who patiently endured the travails of Communism and even managed to save some rubles—initially worth $10,000, let us say. Today they are worth at most $100. It was this expropriation, together with the breakdown of order, that encouraged politicians (such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky) to promise a restoration of the glory days. At the time of the assault on the Parliament building last October, we were told that the streets were full of disaffected people, "yelling slogans and flying the Red communist flag," including many pensioners and war veterans.

The *New York Times* said that Yeltsin had brought "capitalism to Russia," and "a loss of economic security for many." The latter was true—pensions have been adjusted, but still halved by the inflation, I am told by the Hoover Institution's Mikhail Bernstam. And, of course, savings were wiped out. The street rebels were nostalgic all right, but (I would bet) more for their lost purchasing power than for Communism. I mention this because the economic roots of historical events—inflation, taxation, and the insecurity of property in particular—are routinely overlooked, and the recent Russian experience may be a good example. In the press coverage last fall, there was rarely any mention of the ruined ruble, its injustice and its radicalizing effects.

In Western countries today, particularly the U.S., the inflationist tendencies of officials have a formidable opponent in the alertness of customers and the increased sensitivity of markets. It's not as easy as it was in the 1970s to fleece bondholders, and the accessibility of gold markets puts us back on a quasi-gold standard, whether Washington likes it or not. Soaring long-term interest rates would spell the end for Clinton. Adjustable-rate mortgages—in May, a HUD official told me, 36 percent of new mortgages were adjustable rate—have weakened the home-owner "constituency" for inflation. One way to bring inflation to an abrupt end would be to deindex the pensions of federal employees. A pipe dream, I know. Nonetheless, my impression is that the Fed has lost power.

Alan Reynolds, director of Economic Research at the Hudson Institute, is less sanguine. Personal savings are down, tax rates up. A big problem is that the relevant officials in Washington don't know what they are doing, he feels. Greenspan is "a standard central banker and a Keynesian." The Fed should "switch from merely manipulating interest rates" to restricting the purchase of government debt. He sees inflation increasing in 1995 and '96. Jim Grant of *Grant's Interest Rate Observer* sees an accumulation of "monetary tinder," with the nation awaiting only the match. He anticipates a "bull market for things," as opposed to paper. John Mueller of Lehrman Bell Mueller Cannon, Inc. says that more inflation has already been "baked in the cake" by monetary expansion. At the end of 1992 his firm predicted the 1993 gold price surge, and he sees it continuing, "over $450 by next year, and it could hit $500 before it's all over."

Warning: Milton Friedman, the Nobel Prize–winning economist and monetarist, does not think the Fed has been too expansive. "Right now, we do not have any significant inflation in the United States," he says. "There is a lot of talk about pending inflation, but it has not shown up in the figures and, on the basis of what has been happening to monetary growth, there is no basis for believing that it will show up." It will be interesting to see who is right. ❐

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On the Road With Air Clinton

Who's running this airline?

by Brit Hume

Somewhere Over Europe

The chartered 747 carrying the White House press corps heads for Bonn following the end of the G-7 Economic Summit in Naples. The weary company of journalists has settled into seats, grateful for a chance to sleep or eat. But a second-tier National Security Council official named Sandy Vershbow has commandeered the public address microphone and is "briefing" the captive audience "on background." This means he can be quoted only as "a senior official." This is sometimes an objectionable ground rule, but not in this case. Vershbow is sufficiently obscure that his name would mean nothing to the reading and viewing public anyway.

The announcement of this briefing was greeted with hoots of disbelief and protest from traveling White House regulars. This Clinton trip to Latvia, Poland, and the Naples summit has already seen a marathon series of such briefings, delivered at all hours of the day and night, with minimum notice and a seeming maximum effort to interrupt journalists just as their deadlines approached. At one point earlier this day, just as everyone was scrambling to get his last G-7 summit stories filed before the flight to Bonn, reporters were summoned to the White House press office at the rear of the ancient gymnasium that served as the press filing center in Naples. There they found David Gergen huddled with one small group of reporters, while across the room, behind a partition, National Security Adviser Tony Lake met with another. This came just after the State Department's Nicholas Burns had briefed the entire press corps at some length on the president's meetings with Russian President Yeltsin.

Brit Hume is the ABC News chief White House correspondent.

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Reporters listened to Lake and Gergen for a while, then gradually withdrew to their desks. They had work to do. Access to such officials as Lake and Gergen can be useful, but the kind of information they dispense on such occasions is almost all blather about how engaged the president was in the summit proceedings, how much the final communiqué reflected his thinking, and how gratified he was by it all. This is the sixth economic summit I have covered over two administrations, and such puffery has been part of the final day at every one.

On this trip, though, the great Clinton spin machine started early. Aboard Air Force One on the way to Warsaw after Mr. Clinton's first stop in Latvia, the White House summoned reporters for an on-the-record session with Secretary of State Christopher. He rhapsodized about how significant it was that crowds of Latvians had turned out to watch the Clintons come and go, and how impressive that more than 30,000 had crammed a central square in Riga to hear him speak. It turned out that 1.2 million invitations had been delivered by the Latvian government to virtually every household in the land. The hapless Christopher apparently didn't know that, but he certainly should have known better than to say of the Latvians, "In summertime, on a day as nice as this, people will be out in their boats and out in the country." After fifty years of Soviet-style socialism, Latvia hardly seems a place where many people go sailing on Wednesday afternoon, or head for their country places.

Aboard the 747, the NSC official drones on about the visit to Germany. The air fills with such phrases as "expanding cooperation," "creating an integrated security system in Europe," "turning a page in the post-Cold War period," and "a more equal burden-sharing becoming the order of the day." The reporters from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are reading. *The Wall Street Journal* correspondent dozes. The *Los Angeles Times* man polishes his final G-7 piece—his California deadline won't come until after we get to Bonn. But a small gaggle of mostly foreign reporters has gathered around the NSC official to extract what they can from a person who on a normal day in Washington would almost certainly not return their phone calls. Thus the White House has managed to annoy the major U.S. news organizations that cover them every day to stage a briefing for the benefit of the foreign press.

There is some good news for the traveling regulars tonight, however. In Bonn, for the first time on this trip, indeed for the first time in recent memory, the White House has put the press filing center—the combined media workspace and briefing room—in the same hotel where the press is staying. This used to be standard procedure. Reporters put in extremely long hours on these foreign trips. They must be up hours ahead of the president to make baggage calls and get through security sweeps. They then stay up late to complete their stories long after the day's events are over. Having to shuttle back and forth between hotels adds hours to each day. Previous White Houses have recognized the benefit of making press accommodations as convenient as possible: tired journalists tend to be in a foul mood, which may be reflected, however marginally, in their coverage. Journalists obviously don't slant stories based on their creature comforts, but since the press pays for all of its accommodations—the rooms, the filing centers, the buses, the air charters—there is no reason not to provide what they need.

But after the Clinton White House fired the veteran travel office staff to make room for its own team, all that changed. One of the reasons cited for the firings was that the old travel office staff was too "pro-press," an accusation the newcomers are in no danger of facing. The new staff has brought an era of second-rate hotels, filing centers blocks or even miles away, and charter flights, especially in the U.S., aboard a motley array of airlines notable for mechanical breakdowns and cold food. No detail, it seems, is small enough to escape the new travel staff's ineptitude. On this trip, for example, the White House press credentials were laminated first, with the names written on them in ink afterward. After a day, most were blank or nearly so: the ink had simply rubbed off.

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The daily press schedule put out by the White House is often only an approximate guide to what happens, and is so often changed that reporters can't ever be sure that the version they have is the last one. New updates have been slid under doors, in the middle of the night, including earlier morning start times. Sleeping journalists of course did not get the word. On the president's Moscow trip in January, one exasperated TV producer suggested a visit to the "Tomb of the Unknown Schedule." That brought a round of loud guffaws, and the phrase has become part of the White House press lexicon.

Why, you may ask, can't the press simply get by on its own, flying commercial and booking its own hotel rooms? The answer is that the president's schedule compresses events so tightly that the only way to get reporters to them all is for the White House to do the planning. Theoretically this benefits everybody, since it allows the press to do its job and the president to be covered as he does his. →

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Personally, the Clinton travel staff are pleasant and well-meaning people who are doing their best. The problem is that moving hundreds of journalists to far-flung foreign destinations and getting them in and out of heavily guarded venues is not an easy thing. There are problems no travel agent or tour director would ever face. They must be anticipated and planned for. Palms must sometimes be greased. The advance men who composed most of the old travel office had been doing it for years and their experience was an asset the Clinton White House inherited but was too obtuse or arrogant to recognize. The newcomers are now busily reinventing the wheel, and furthering the Clinton White House's considerable reputation for incompetence in the process.

Much the same applies to the press office. Press secretary Dee Dee Myers is a likable woman with an almost perfect temperament for the job. She is cheerful, patient, and possessed of a good sense of humor. She has learned a lot in a short time about the federal government, Congress, and the Washington press corps. But it is almost impossible to learn enough in eighteen months to be an effective spokesman for a branch of government with which one has had no previous experience. Her problems are deepened by frequent lack of access to the president and to information she needs. On June 27, the Monday when chief of staff Mack McLarty resigned, Myers had told reporters the president had no visitors that weekend at Camp David. It turned out that McLarty's departure, his replacement by Leon Panetta, and the shift of David Gergen to the State Department had been worked out in meetings that weekend at Camp David. Nobody had thought to tell the press secretary.

Communications Director Mark Gearan is nearly as likable as Myers, but faces similar problems being taken seriously. On the day when reporters discovered that the misbegotten staff golf outing aboard a presidential helicopter had involved not one of the white-topped Marine choppers, but two, Gearan summoned reporters to his office at six in the evening. He told them unequivocally that there had been no second helicopter. Less than a half-hour later, ABC News aired a report in which an eyewitness described in detail seeing the two helicopters flying off together. A sheepish Gearan called ABC minutes later to say that, well, there had been two after all. The military, it seemed, had misled him earlier. But no seasoned press officer should have let that happen. The White House had been approached that day by Frank Murray of the *Washington Times*, who had been told by a Marine Corps official that two helicopters had been involved. Gearan had also been told by other reporters that eyewitnesses reported seeing two. Gearan should have known immediately when the Pentagon, or whoever, denied it, that something was wrong. But he was apparently too eager to believe—and repeat—the denial, a classic mistake.

Those around Myers and Gearan are, for the most part, less experienced than they. One of their young aides, riding with the press through Rome in June, was asked how he liked the city. It was nice, he said, but added, "the statues seem a little worn." He wasn't kidding. Secretary of Education Richard Riley has told his staff to always check, upon receiving orders from the White House, to determine the age of the person giving them.

There is a deeper problem, though, than the callowness of the staff. It is the president and first lady's profound contempt of the press. They seem well able to deal with the roughing up they get from the political opposition. Bob Dole can humiliate Mr. Clinton over his economic stimulus package and lead the charge against him on Whitewater. The president will still have him at his side as he tours an American military cemetery in Italy, where Dole was injured in World War II. Both Mr. and Mrs. Clinton seem to understand that it is the job of the political opposition to oppose. But they seem confounded by the adversarial quality of the news coverage they get. You can hardly blame them for not liking it, but it's been this way for years. The wonder is that the president seems to think he's been singled out. "I don't suppose there's any public figure that's ever been subject to any more violent personal attacks than I have, at least in modern times," he said on June 24. This is absurd, of course. (One would think Bill Clinton, of all people, would remember "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?")

The sense of persecution may help explain the low priority assigned to accommodating journalists. But it's hard to see how such an approach helps Mr. Clinton generate the kind of coverage he plainly wants. ❐

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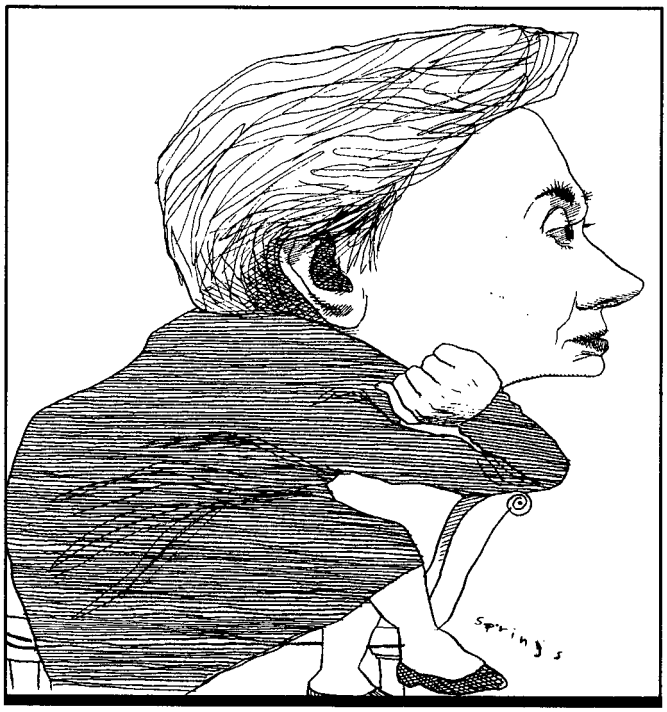
David Brock

Where Was Hillary?

And where's the desk she told the IRS she bought for $1,116?



In all of the shady Arkansas financial dealing and Washington strong-arming that have been lumped under the rubric of Whitewater, no single fact, taken by itself, has proved of great legal or ethical or political import. But scandals as complex as Whitewater unfold slowly, and it is the accumulation of facts that will eventually yield, like brush strokes on a canvas, a complete picture of the First Couple.

The most recent stipple is provided by the First Lady—specifically, by her claim that she made her own trading decisions during a nine-month foray into the commodity futures market in the late 1970s. As is well known, Hillary invested $1,000 in cash in a margin account in October 1978 with the brokerage Ray E. Friedman & Co. (Refco). By July 1979, when the Refco account was closed, she had made trading profits of approximately $99,537.

When this extraordinary profit was first reported by the *New York Times* this past spring, the White House said Hillary had "invested . . . in her own accounts." This was immediately contradicted by her broker, Robert L. "Red" Bone, who said, "I can't recall ever dealing with the Clintons."

The White House then revealed that Tyson Foods lawyer James B. Blair had been "consulted on many of the commodities trades and was viewed as an important financial adviser." Blair initially downplayed his role, saying, "I passed on my advice. She may have taken it sometimes, and she may not have taken it sometimes."

Within a week, the White House acknowledged that "most of the commodity orders . . . were placed by James B. Blair." Blair now conceded that "I turned the orders in." But both he and Hillary insisted that she made her own decisions (sometimes *consulting* with Blair) and controlled the trades. The trades—thirty-two in all—were then called in to Refco by Blair.

None of these explanations squares with Hillary's schedule at the time. In fact, in the case of at least one major trade, her various alibis and fallback positions appear untrue because they are logistically impossible.

In her press conference in late April, her final statement to date on the controversy, Hillary tried hard to further the impression that she made the calls on when to buy and sell the futures contracts. She clearly hoped to dispel the suspicion that Blair (or someone else) had essentially conducted the trades in her name, raising the issue of whether Blair was buying political influence for Tyson Foods through the arrangement. (Others who benefited from Blair's advice conceded to the *New York Times* on July 5 that they left the trades

David Brock is the author of The Real Anita Hill *(Free Press), now in paperback, and an investigative writer for* TAS. *Matt Labash helped in the research for this article.*

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entirely to him, and allegations that Tyson received favorable treatment during both Clinton's governorship and his presidency have been the subject of numerous media reports.)

"So [Blair] would talk to me, and he'd say: 'Here's what I think is going on. What do you think?'" Hillary explained. She consulted with Blair, she said, but she did "not make every trade he recommended" and "used some other advice as well," including keeping abreast of the market herself by reading the *Wall Street Journal* and consulting other unnamed advisers. Asked flatly if she had been "riding on [Blair's] coattails," Hillary replied, "No, I wasn't . . ."

However forthright Hillary's denials, there is now evidence that someone other than herself directed her trades. On two days during which Hillary traded in futures in 1979 and 1980, she was presiding over day-long meetings of the Legal Services Corporation board and thus could not plausibly have tracked futures markets on her own throughout the day to take advantage of price fluctuations, as someone who was directing her own trades would have done.

The Frost case is part of a now-established pattern: the fourth such non-disclosure in Rose's legal work for the federal government to date.

In 1977, President Carter appointed Hillary to the Legal Services Corporation, which oversees the government's legal assistance programs for the poor. She served as chairman from 1978 to late 1980, and remained on the LSC board until 1982. Both positions required Hillary's participation in board meetings.

According to records released by the White House in April of this year, on January 26, 1979, Hillary purchased eleven live cattle contracts and made a second purchase of three live cattle contracts. These trades are especially interesting because they represent Hillary's second most successful trading day as a cattle speculator, resulting in a net profit of $25,280 when these fourteen contracts were sold a month later.

Yet on this very same day, Hillary was busy conducting an LSC board meeting, which was open to the public and covered by a court reporter, as is the board's usual practice. According to the transcript of the meeting, which is a public record, Hillary chaired the "1979 Board Retreat" at the Airlie House in Airlie, Virginia, on January 26 and 27. On the 26th, the day of the two trades, the meeting run by Hillary started at 9:45 a.m. ("I'm Hillary Rodham," she began, "and I'm chair—whatever—person, thing, or whatever") and lasted all day (adjourning at 5:15 p.m.) with a short break for lunch. According to the minutes, there were supplementary activities for the LSC board scheduled during lunch.

The official transcript shows Hillary did not seem to desire any extra time to consult with her cattle-futures advisers in Arkansas or check the market herself:

> CHAIRMAN RODHAM: Get something to eat in the dining room and go to the Garden Room. We are going to be back here at 1:00—2:00? Why so long?
>
> No, I don't want to wait until 2:00. Let's be back. (Whereupon, at 12:10 p.m. o'clock, the meeting was recessed, to reconvene at 1:00 p.m., this same day, Friday, January 26, 1979.)

Thus, Hillary may have been able to excuse herself for at most a few moments during two short recesses—one in the morning and one in the afternoon—to give the okay for the transactions, as the non-discretionary Refco account required her to do, but she would not have had the time to focus her attention on market fluctuations that day.

The size of this day's trades is telling: Since she made more than $25,000 on the trades, a market swing in the opposite direction could have left her $25,000 poorer, a significant chunk of money to wager on the fly when one considers that her husband's salary was only $35,000.

The second trading day, May 1, 1980, is somewhat less interesting because it was in Hillary's second futures account, at Stephens Inc. This was a discretionary account, meaning that trades could be ordered by a broker without her personally giving the go-ahead for every trade. According to the records released by the White House, Hillary sold one SEP '80 T BOND that day—a short sale, because she then bought the SEP '80 T BOND on May 13 for a profit of $533.25.

But Hillary's chairing of yet another all-day LSC board meeting on May 1—this time at the Rivermont Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee—suggests again that she would not have had the time to monitor the markets and decide for herself whether and how to trade. That meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. and adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

It would later be revealed that during the period of her tenure at the LSC, Hillary was aggressively avoiding taxes—the now-famous deductions for Bill's used underwear being only the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, in 1980, the last year Hillary was LSC chairman, the Clintons failed to declare $6,498 Hillary made in capital gains on the Stephens trades, recording only a $449 commodity loss for the year. (This past April, when the problem was discovered, the Clintons paid $14,615 in back taxes and interest.)

Tax records from those days, reluctantly released by a White House under media pressure, show that Hillary also took dubious deductions to defray the tax liability on her Legal Services Corporation board of directors income. Rather than report it as wages, she reported it as business income on Schedule C (listing her business as "consulting"), which made it easier to write off office furnishings, supplies, and books.

For example, in 1979, when she was board chairman, Hillary reported $8,823 in gross income from the LSC; against this, she took deductions of $555 for car expenses and $644 for depreciation on furnishings. She placed the cost of a desk at $1,116; shelves at $120; a sofa at $750; and books at $57—deductions someone in business for herself might take to furnish an office.

But was the furniture a legitimate deduction (if in fact there

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was any furniture)? After all, in 1979, Hillary was the wife of the governor, and the governor's mansion in Little Rock presumably comes fully furnished. She was also working at the Rose firm, which surely didn't require its lawyers to provide their own desks. And as LSC board chairman, she had use of furnished offices and conference rooms in Washington.

I canvassed four former members of the LSC board, none of whom claimed deductions on their taxes for furniture or supplies or their automobile, and each of whom laughed out loud when read the list of Chairman Rodham's deductions. "Purchases of equipment?" Mike Wallace, a Mississippi lawyer who served as board chairman in the mid-1980s, asked incredulously. "That's a new one on me." Former board member Basile Uddo, who served during the Bush administration, called the deductions "way out of line and unheard of."

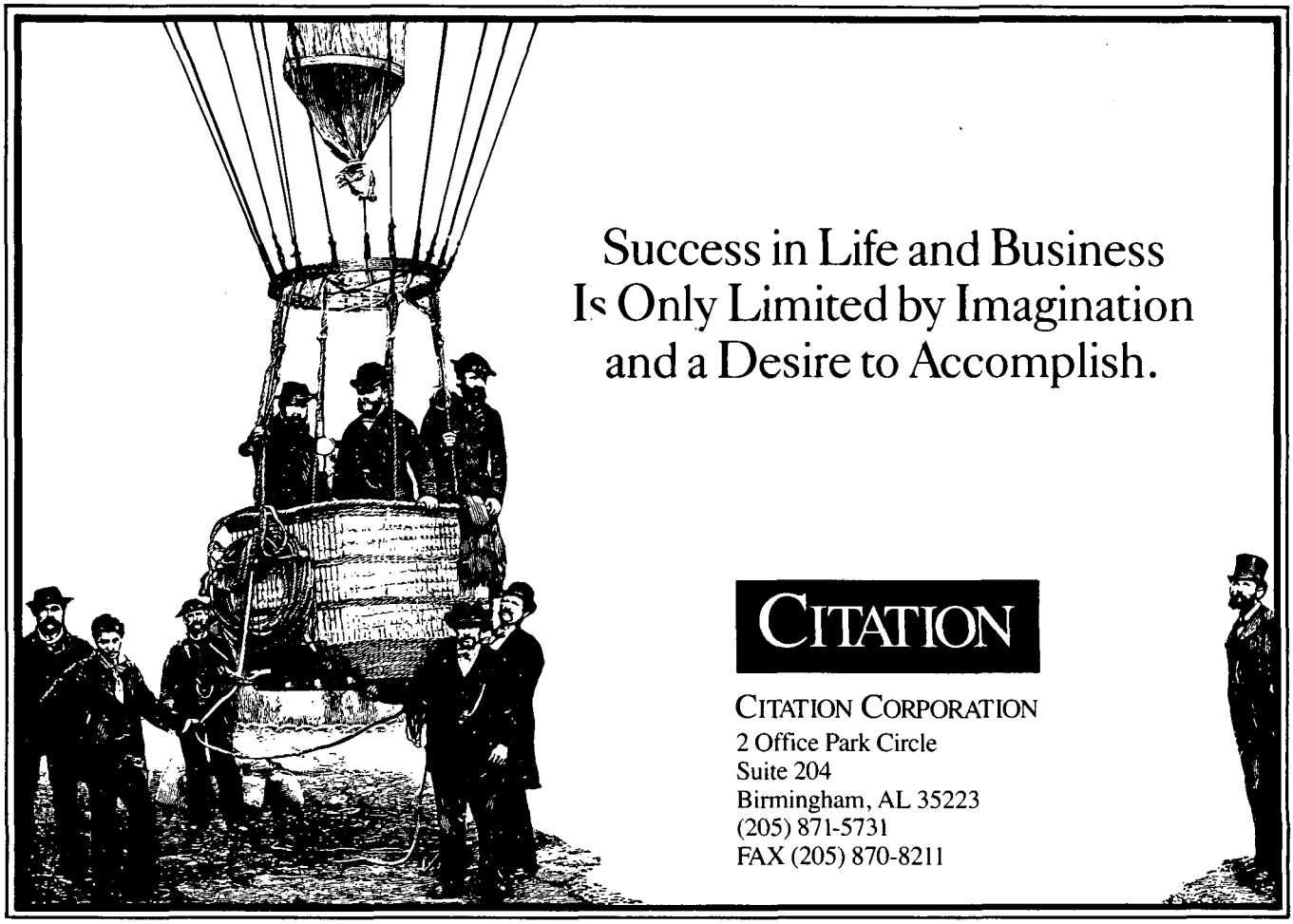
Interestingly, in the LSC years, the Clintons' tax returns were prepared by the Little Rock accounting firm of Frost & Co. The Clintons' little-noticed ties to Frost & Co. raise some of the same troubling questions as Hillary's representations of Madison Guaranty and of the U.S. government in a case against Clinton cocaine crony Dan Lasater—that is, questions that go directly to Hillary's ethics as a lawyer.

In 1984, Frost & Co. conducted an audit of Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan, giving the bank a clean bill of health. In 1985, when Hillary and other Rose lawyers appeared before state regulators appointed by her husband to ask that Madison be allowed to raise needed capital by issuing preferred stock, she cited the Frost & Co. audit—which had been written by an accountant who had two outstanding loans from Madison. (The plan was approved, but the stock deal never went through because the capital was never raised.) In 1988, Madison sued its accountants for breach of contract, claiming that Frost & Co.'s audits misrepresented the failing bank's financial condition.

In 1989, the bank was closed and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation was appointed to manage the conservatorship, which included pursuing legal claims by the bank. The Rose Law Firm was chosen to represent the U.S. government in the suit against Frost & Co. after Rose partner Vince Foster wrote a letter soliciting the FDIC work on behalf of Rose.

With Webb Hubbell as lead attorney, Rose in 1991 settled the original $10 million suit with Frost & Co. for only $1 million, which was less than the insurance coverage held by Frost & Co. at the time. The Rose firm was paid $400,000 in fees, a whopping sum for a non-litigated settlement. Frost appeared happy with the settlement; its managing partner Steven Humphries said at the time that his firm's attorneys had "no problem" with Rose's involvement in the suit.

Since Hillary's firm was suing her former accountants, the ethics issue was whether Hillary should have told the govern-



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ment about her business ties to Frost & Co. For one thing, the firm had prepared her taxes at a time when she was doing everything possible to avoid paying her fair share. For another, Frost & Co. and TCBY Yogurt—on whose board Hillary served from May 1989 to May 1992, during the period that the case against Frost & Co. proceeded—were partners in Capitol Avenue Development Co., which owned the $68 million TCBY Tower in downtown Little Rock. If Frost & Co. were bankrupted by the litigation, TCBY would suffer.

There was also an undisclosed political relationship between Bill Clinton and Frost & Co., a contributor to Clinton campaigns. Indeed, in August 1990, when Rose was seeking to settle the suit for the government, Frost & Co. gave $1,000 to Clinton's gubernatorial re-election campaign. (H.G. "Jack" Frost, the company's namesake, left the firm in 1980, and he says he retained no financial interest in the firm other than yearly income from a non-compete agreement. Jack Frost gave both money and gifts of air transportation to both Clintons over the years, state records show.)

Though Hillary herself was not involved in the 1989 case, for purposes of conflict-of-interest rules, one partner's work is generally attributed to all of the partners in the firm. In other words, the judgment of Hillary's law firm might have been colored by the fact of Frost & Co.'s political contributions to her husband and the prior fiduciary relationship between Frost & Co. and both Clintons. As the Clintons' tax preparers in the late 1970s, the small firm may have had access to damaging information about both the Clintons' Whitewater investment and Hillary's cattle-futures speculation. As the auditors for Madison Guaranty, Frost & Co. may have found links between the bank and the Whitewater development—such as insured deposits from Madison diverted to Whitewater. Might Rose's lawyers have had an incentive, then, to negotiate a settlement favorable to Frost & Co.? If that was the case, the U.S. taxpayer was not properly represented by Rose.

Even if the representation was not compromised, the Hillary-Frost relationship is the sort of link most clients would want to know about. Arkansas adopted the American Bar Association's "Model Rules of Professional Conduct" for attorneys in 1985. The provision relevant to the Frost case states:

> A lawyer shall not represent a client if the representation of that client may be materially limited by the lawyer's responsibilities to another client or to a third person, or by the lawyer's own interests, unless: (1) the lawyer reasonably believes the representation will not be adversely affected; and (2) the client consents after consultation.

In 1990, the FDIC's legal division adopted policies governing conflicts of interests for the lawyers it retains. The policy says:

> A conflict of interest may arise because the law firm or a lawyer associated with the firm has a position or an interest of its or his or her own that places the law firm in a posture adverse to the FDIC. . . . A conflict of interest is generally regarded as existing whenever the law firm or lawyer in question either has or represents an interest adverse to the client of a nature sufficient to affect counsel's legal judgment and ability to represent the client zealously.

The upshot is that Hillary's business and political links to Frost & Co. could have presented a conflict for the Rose lawyers in the Madison case; the government should have known about it. In and of itself, the non-disclosure may be judged a minor matter; but it is part of a now-established pattern, the fourth such non-disclosure in Rose's legal work for the federal government to date.[1]

Earlier this year, the FDIC conducted an investigation into whether Hillary's prior representation of Madison before the Arkansas Securities Commission presented a conflict in the 1989 case. At the time of the earlier case, she was on a $2,000-a-month retainer from the bank. The FDIC found that no written record existed to show what the Rose firm disclosed to the government before taking the 1989 case. The FDIC said its attorneys had no recollection of the Rose firm mentioning that its lawyers, including Hillary Clinton, had represented Madison before state regulators in 1985, or that Hillary was connected to James McDougal.

But the agency concluded that, if Rose had known, it would not have been a conflict in any event, reasoning that in both the 1985 and 1989 cases Rose was representing the S&L's interests. The 1989 Frost case, however, raises a different type of conflict, because a Rose lawyer had ties to a party (Frost) whose interests were adverse to Rose's client's.

The FDIC review was fishy from the start, since the agency was investigating itself. Some of the lawyers involved in the review had even overruled contemporaneous reports of Rose Firm conflicts from FDIC field personnel. The review so angered Republican senators (Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina called it "an eight-page insanity plea") that the agency's acting chairman agreed to re-open it. A probe by the agency's inspector general is continuing. Ken Boehm of the National Legal and Policy Center—the ethics watchdog group that has sued Hillary's health-care task force for operating in secret—has asked the FDIC inspector general to determine whether Rose's representation was affected by the undisclosed Hillary-Frost connection.

Don't expect much: The FDIC also found no problem in a 1987 case involving Dan Lasater, who gave the president's brother Roger $8,000 to pay off drug debts. Hillary and Vince Foster represented the U.S. government in a suit against Lasater, who had been sued by a failed Illinois S&L for money lost in alleged unauthorized trades by the Lasater firm. Rose settled the $3.3 million case for just $200,000. ❐

[1] The only one not discussed here concerns Webb Hubbell, whose father-in-law Seth Ward, an officer of Madison Financial Corp., defaulted on substantial loans to Madison. Ward sued Madison for unpaid commissions, and the case was settled on appeal. Despite Hubbell's interest and involvement in the Ward proceedings, which were ongoing during the Madison case against Frost, the FDIC found no conflict because Hubbell was not Ward's attorney.

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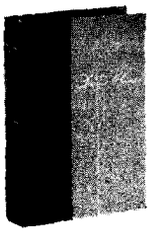

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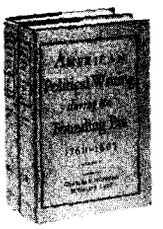

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James Bovard

Suburban Guerrilla

HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros thinks inner-city poverty and violence will disappear if transplanted to outlying areas via such seedy programs as Section 8.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, the federal agency that spawned the most barbaric housing conditions in the nation, is now seeking vastly greater power over private housing. Federal fair-housing efforts of the 1990s have degenerated into a multi-billion-dollar crusade to give preferential treatment to public housing clients. Fair housing programs have moved far from their original goal of reconciling disparities between blacks and whites. They now amount to a project to dictate where welfare recipients live in every county, city, and cranny across the nation.

The charge is being led by HUD secretary Henry Cisneros and HUD assistant secretary for fair housing Roberta Achtenberg. Cisneros is launching an ambitious plan to use the $25-billion HUD budget, federal regulations, and federal lawyers to greatly increase the power of bureaucrats and politicians over private housing decisions. At a time when more and more minority families are achieving middle-class housing standards on their own, the Clinton administration is trying to concoct a fair housing emergency based on a contrived epidemic of racial discrimination. The fair-housing crusade is good politics, of course. At this writing, Congress is on the verge of approving the administration's two-year $60 billion Housing Choice and Community Reinvestment Act, which will not only tighten HUD's control over where Americans may live, but enhance the prerogatives of the welfare lobby. It's not by accident that Achtenberg calls the pending legislation "the largest investment in civil rights that the federal government [has] made in the past fifteen years."

Federal Blockbusting Redux

Cisneros is seeking $149 million for the so-called Moving to Independence program to relocate poor people away from "poverty communities" or "racially concentrated neighborhoods." In January, fair housing czar Achtenberg told a convention of 1,100 advocates in Washington that the program, "through rent subsidies, enables minority public housing residents to move to conventional housing in low-minority communities. . . . We view this primarily as an effort at income integration but it has a disproportionate impact on racial minorities." For the Clinton administration, it is now considered "unfair housing" if poor people cannot live like rich people.

Cisneros declared on March 17: "Communities that thrive are communities that are home to people of diverse incomes. It is no longer acceptable for the poorest of the poor to be concentrated in developments located in the most dangerous and decaying neighborhoods." HUD will provide $70 million for 1,300 rental vouchers to help people in pub-

James Bovard is the author, most recently, of Lost Rights: The Destruction of American Liberty *(St. Martin's Press).*

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lic housing projects in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Baltimore, and New York to move into surrounding middle-class and affluent suburbs. HUD has indicated that it hopes to greatly expand this program in the future. Few of the "working poor" that the Clinton administration is so exercised over will get to take part in this exodus, for *only* residents of public housing or other HUD handout recepients are eligible to move to "low poverty areas"—i.e., affluent areas.

Last September, Cisneros warned, "All of the money that we might put into public housing . . . will not be successful as long . . . as America is a society divided spatially." Cisneros called economic integration an "over-arching objective," and, as the *Washington Post* noted, "ordered his agency to advance economic integration at every . . . opportunity." By defining unfair housing as a lack of "income integration," Cisneros can now call almost every neighborhood in America an unfair housing market, liable to intervention from Washington. According to the Clinton administration, America is suffering a great injustice because people who do not work cannot afford middle-class housing.

According to the Clinton administration, America is suffering a great injustice because people who do not work cannot afford middle-class housing.

Cisneros is moving aggressively to relocate black welfare recipients to middle-class white areas in and around Omaha, Nebraska. Public housing residents had sued in 1990 to end the alleged segregation of poor blacks in public housing; the local public housing authority reached an agreement with the plaintiffs to relocate some of the poor into Omaha's nicer suburbs.

At that time, the local public housing authority was already operating a program to move selected tenants out of the projects into thirty-eight single-family homes it had bought. To be eligible, recipients needed to have held a job for at least a year and to pay at least $221 a month in rent. But in 1991, federal judge Lyle Strom ruled that such conditions violated the constitutional rights of welfare recipients by effectively excluding a "disproportionate number of otherwise eligible minority applicants" from the single family homes. Strom ruled that the policy "wrongfully denied rights to the valuable benefits promised by such housing, including integrated neighborhoods, low crime and increased job opportunities." Cisneros is now trying to use Omaha to set a precedent for compulsory relocation programs across the nation.

Achtenberg declared last September: "Part of the problem has been HUD's lack of resolve to essentially use its money programs in a way to further fair housing goals." Last December, Cisneros got Ossie Langfelder, the mayor of Springfield, Illinois, to reverse his stand and endorse HUD's scattered-site housing program for the Springfield area. Cisneros apparently won Langfelder's support by threatening to withhold a $20-million HUD grant to the Springfield Housing Authority. Cisneros has promised to deny HUD grants—such as Community Development Block Grants worth $3.4 billion a year—to communities that do not adopt aggressive fair housing codes.

Federally Built Wastelands

Such hardball tactics are mystifying, given that Cisneros knows a good deal about his agency's history. He admitted to Congress in June 1993 that "HUD has in many cases exacerbated the declining quality of life in America." HUD continues to devastate neighborhoods, due to the bankruptcy and deterioration of thousands of HUD-financed apartment buildings across the nation. But neither Cisneros nor Achtenberg shows any concern about the track record of their own programs.

In 1968, Congress passed the National Housing Act, which provided for federally insured mortgages to poor people in inner cities, among others. The act created the Section 235 program to provide heavily subsidized loans for low-income families and individuals to allow them to buy homes, with special assistance for mothers on welfare. The most serious problem with the program was housing abandonment—since most families had almost no equity in their homes, it was cheaper for them to abandon the house than to sell it. Tens of thousands of homes emptied and were left to rot in previously stable neighborhoods.

Particularly hard-hit was Detroit, where Mayor Roman Gribbs declared that a single abandoned house on a block "becomes a magnet for vandalism, crime, fire, blight, drug addiction, and other kinds of socially pathological forces." The *Detroit News* opined that the program was turning Detroit neighborhoods into "'ghost towns' where a handful of families exist amid vandalized and fire-gutted homes." Detroit City Council President Carl Levin called it "Hurricane HUD." Between 1970 and 1976, HUD took over 13 percent of the housing stock in Detroit—25,000 homes—after owners abandoned the houses or defaulted. June Ridgway of the Detroit Board of Assessors declared in 1976, "HUD has cost every citizen in Detroit 20 percent on his house."

HUD also devastated Chicago. The *Chicago Tribune* in 1975 denounced the Section 235 program for causing "the decay of hundreds of good neighborhoods":

> No natural disaster on record has caused destruction on the scale of the government's housing programs. . . . It took only four years of the federally insured mortgage program to reduce a neat, middle-class neighborhood into a shattered, decaying slum.

Southern Chicago Commission Chairman Julian H. Levi called HUD "the greatest enemy of community stability

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within the city of Chicago." President Nixon, surveying the effect of Section 235, complained in 1973: "All across America, the federal government has become the biggest slumlord in history."

Section 8: HUD'S License to Sow Chaos

Though Section 235 was an unmitigated disaster, its driving principle—using tax dollars to forcibly mix different economic classes—has re-emerged as the cornerstone of federal housing policy. This time, HUD is using the Section 8 program, passed by Congress in 1974, to provide direct rent subsidies to low-income families. Section 8 currently gives $7 billion a year in rental subsidies to roughly 2 million families. Spending on the program is scheduled to double to $14 billion a year by 1996, and Cisneros is planning to distribute an additional 100,000 Section 8 certificates in the coming years.

Section 8 is the flagship of the Clinton administration's effort to impose racial and economic housing quotas on American suburbs. Basically, it seeks to end the stigma of welfare by granting welfare recipients the lifestyle of self-reliant upper middle class. Vouchers entitle welfare families to live in apartments with rents as high as $1,657 for a four-bedroom apartment in some areas—a higher rent than the vast majority of American renters are now paying. HUD establishes the Section 8 subsidy level (so-called "fair market rents") by comparing rents in each geographical area. But HUD's methodology has an extreme upward bias, partly because many HUD administrators want to bankroll low-income families to live in upper-class neighborhoods.

Section 8 vouchers entitle welfare families to live in apartments with rents as high as $1,657 for a four-bedroom apartment in some areas—a higher rent than the vast majority of American renters are now paying.

In May, HUD raised Section 8 subsidy levels in Plano, Texas, to $750 for a two-bedroom and $900 for a three-bedroom apartment. According to HUD, the median rent in Plano is only $586 per month. Helen Macey, executive director of the Plano Housing Authority, defended the disparity in these terms: "Our residents will be given better choices of where they can live." Janice Stanfield, a HUD housing management specialist, said: "Section 8 is not intended to isolate people or limit them to certain parts of town."

HUD requires Section 8 recipients to pay between 10 and 30 percent of their income for rent, and the government picks up the difference. But HUD makes little or no effort to verify the income of Section 8 recipients or to insure that they actually pay their small share. The resulting scandals have been documented in dozens of General Accounting Office and HUD Inspector General reports since 1975. (Investigators revealed in April that 390 of 400 Section 8 certificates distributed by the District of Columbia since 1990 were given to people who had paid bribes to housing officials. Though many of the Section 8 recipients were blatantly ineligible for the benefits, the D.C. housing department has made no effort to retrieve the certificates.

Not only do Section 8 recipients reap a financial windfall, but HUD also forces landlords to treat Section 8 renters better than renters who pay their own bills. HUD decreed that landlords can require only a $50 security deposit from Section 8 renters, instead of the usual full month's rent. It would be difficult to concoct a better rule to maximize the irresponsibility of a privileged class of renters.

Not surprisingly, Section 8 recipients enjoy far more comfortable housing than many working Americans. At Manhattan Plaza in New York City, Section 8 pays for apartments with parquet floors and on-premise swimming, racquet, and tennis facilities. At Taino Towers in New York City, HUD paid for a gymnasium, greenhouse, and even an indoor swimming pool for the subsidized residents. At the Morningside apartments in Chicago, subsidized residents enjoy a billiard room, library, and an arts and crafts room. The Elm Street Plaza project in Chicago advertised that its Section 8 apartments included all the "luxury amenities" one would expect. In 1993, Section 8 certificates were used to entitle low-income/welfare families to move into an apartment complex in Silver Spring, Maryland, that includes a heated pool with water jets, microwave ovens, and "deluxe modern kitchens with convenient breakfast bars." Pamela Price told the *Los Angeles Times* in March that "this is like Christmas" after she used her new Section 8 certificate to move into a luxurious apartment complex with a heated swimming pool, four spas, six tennis courts, and two air-conditioned racquetball courts. GAO concluded in a 1980 report, "The high rents and quality of [Section 8] housing invite resentment on the part of the taxpaying public who see their subsidized neighbors living in better accommodations than they themselves can afford." GAO also observed that Section 8's goal of mixing the poor and the middle class is often not achieved because Section 8 housing "is often so costly that moderate and even middle-income unassisted households cannot afford to live in it."

Section 8 is hailed by many liberals for giving lower-income people "freedom of choice" in housing, But in Chicago, where thousands of Section 8 certificates have been distributed, public housing residents have flooded a handful of communities on the city's southern edge, turning parts of some towns into a "Section 8 corridor." Sixty-five percent of Cook County's Section 8 families, the vast majority of them headed by unemployed females, are clustered in fourteen south suburbs. Officials in Pacesetter, Illinois, claim that "a sudden influx into the

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neighborhood of subsidized families about six years ago turned a borderline neighborhood into a slum." Delores Irving of Chicago's Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities warned: "We are building ghettos in the suburbs." Michael Roache, executive director of the Fair Housing Coalition of the South Suburbs, observed: "The intent of the Section 8 program is not to create Section 8 neighborhoods, but that's exactly what's happening."

When Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and Chicago Housing Authority chairman Vince Lane announced a new plan in April to export public housing residents beyond the city limits, dozens of suburban mayors denounced the proposal. Calumet City mayor Jerry Genova: "We need homeowners that are supporting the schools and the government. Section 8 doesn't provide that. What it basically provides is a system of welfare dependence." Nicholas Blase, mayor of Niles, said that imposing subsidized housing on a town "is not the American way." His constituents, he said in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, "have been able to pull themselves up by the bootstraps to be here. People resent it when government tries to make somebody their economic equivalent by subsidizing them." Both Cisneros and Achtenberg consider Chicago's program to be a model for the nation; Cisneros declared that he hoped eventually to start a similar effort in every major city.

Section 8 recipients can also pull down a neighborhood because of the paralyzing red tape that HUD imposes on private landlords who want to evict trouble-makers, hooligans, or deadbeats. A *Boston Globe* editorial last year complained:

CAM Scam

Henry Cisneros, while declaiming against racial conflicts, has himself grown rich exploiting his minority status. In May 1989, after ending his fourth term as mayor of San Antonio, he created the Cisneros Asset Management Co. (CAM), which now manages over $500 million in funds. While Cisneros enjoys speaking of his experience in running a "private business," CAM's success is due largely to government mandates and its founder's status as a Hispanic.

State legislators and city councils are increasingly forcing pension funds to set aside a percentage of their total assets to be handled by minority-owned firms. California in 1989 required that 15 percent of its retirement-fund contracts be set aside for minorities; in January, Rhode Island set aside 2 percent of its state and municipal workers' pension fund for minorities and women. CAM handled investments primarily for government, colleges, and labor unions—all of which often face explicit or implicit minority quotas. CAM was selected earlier this year to handle 10 percent of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport pension plan, in part to allow the airport to achieve its goal of placing 10 percent of the pension fund with minority-owned firms. (Cisneros told this journalist that less than half of the money he managed "was given to CAM as a result of a minority search.") At least one of CAM's contracts has been linked to a controversy: auditors revealed last December that Texas A&M University hired several money managers—including CAM—without competitive bidding and without a written contract.

The Office of Government Ethics/HUD Office of General Counsel ruled that Cisneros could continue his affiliation with CAM as long as his stock was placed in a voting trust. According to a January 7, 1993 letter from Cisneros's personal lawyer Raymond Ortman, Cisneros pledged to remove his name from his business, and make certain that it could not be used for promotion. Cisneros did not reach agreement with the company within the 60-day limit set in his letter of personal commitment.

On his 1993 financial disclosure form, Cisneros stated that his shares in the company were worth between $500,000 and $1 million. Cisneros told me: "I concluded on my own that despite the financial loss associated with it, that I would separate myself from the company. I sold my shares in the company for $320,000 last June. That price was a fire-sale price—it was not the normal process. Frankly, I went the extra mile to sell, even though the official reading I got was that it was not necessary. . . . I sold it at less than what I could have made in order that the company had a better chance to be stable over the long term."

The sale agreement contained a stipulation that Cisneros's name would be removed from the company name. The *Dallas Business Journal* reported on March 4: "Secretary Cisneros said he has objected to the continual use of the name. But, he said, he cannot think of any course of action short of a lawsuit—which he said he cannot afford." (Cisneros's financial disclosure form indicates that he earned over $470,000 in 1992.) When I phoned CAM director Gilbert Garcia in March, he assured me that the company was planning to change the name of the fund. "There is no controversy. I don't know what you are writing about," he said. Yet, as this article goes to press in late July, the firm continues to brandish Cisneros's name.

Insofar as CAM receives contracts as a result of minority preferences, and since Cisneros has become, in the words of the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, "the Clinton administration's chief defender of civil rights," continuing to use Cisneros's name could benefit the company. Voting trust or no, at this writing Cisneros has become a leading Clinton administration spokesman for changing the laws that govern investment pension funds.

—*J.B.*

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> Among the roughly 8,000 families receiving federally subsidized Section 8 rent certificates in Boston, most are concentrated in Roxbury and Dorchester. The majority occupy homes owned by absentee landlords who are reluctant to evict tenants, even for the most egregious lease violations. For landlords, the guaranteed subsidy payment proves a stronger incentive than the desire to maintain a safe building.

In April 1993, the *Globe* noted the disruption caused by Section 8 renters living across the street from Mayor Raymond Flynn:

> The subsidized tenants living in the house across the street were nuisances, allegedly using drugs and making loud and threatening noises, but little could be done about it. The landlord had paid no attention. The housing organization that provided the subsidy had thrown up its hands; federal rules forbade it from removing the family from the program.

In Haledon, New Jersey, last fall, a public hearing on Section 8 exploded into "meetings [that] were as rancorous as any ever held in the borough," the *Bergen Record* reported. "Residents denounced their neighbors in federally-subsidized housing, accusing them of ruining property values and bringing a bad element to the borough. The two meetings held to protest the 'problem' were standing room only."

Section 8's links to crime and declining property values have become political hot potatoes. When 441 new Section 8 vouchers were proposed for St. Louis in late 1991, St. Louis alderman Jack Garvey complained, "I do want to get funding but I don't want to put the neighborhoods in my ward at risk." After a $35 million plan for St. Louis was approved in February 1992, alderman Marit Clark promised to "go to war" if Section 8 landlords did not evict trouble-making tenants. (Clark added, "I get as many complaints from my black constituents as I do from whites.") Last January, alderman Paul Beckerle protested that neighborhoods throughout his ward were being dragged down by a crime wave generated by recent Section 8 arrivals. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* reported in March that crime had soared as a result of the subsidies, and "a growing number of homeowners say Section 8 is undermining their neighborhoods." Lieut. Joseph Richardson of the St. Louis Police Department declared of one batch of Section 8 renters: "There is evidence of drugs being sold there, and ample evidence of gang activity responsible for the drug activity. These are terrible neighbors. No one would want to live next door to them." Area residents protested loudly, but, as the *Post Dispatch* noted:

> Both sides agree that the rules for the Section 8 subsidized housing program make it difficult to get rid of troublesome tenants. Section 8 recipients can't be punished—by losing their eligibility for rent subsidies, for example—for bad behavior. And Section 8 landlords can't be dropped from the program for picking tenants who misbehave.

The contradiction between HUD's regulations and its rhetoric was made stark earlier this year in Los Angeles. The January earthquake left thousands homeless; HUD sent in officials bearing tens of thousands of Section 8 certificates for eighteen months of nearly-free housing for the favored poor. Families that received Section 8 vouchers distributed after the earthquake are entitled to up to $1,391 a month in rent subsidies for four-bedroom apartments. (Some critics view HUD's effort as a $200-million public-relations extravaganza for the Clinton administration; emergency victims have never before received such long-term subsidies.)

But many private landlords balked at renting to Section 8 recipients. Much of the resistance apparently stemmed from a HUD rule that required landlords to give subsidized tenants 90 days before eviction; many tenants abuse the rule to avoid paying any rent for their last three months. Cisneros admitted, "We do not want to give people a three-month free ride on the backs of property owners."

Yet at the same time, Achtenberg was storming into southern California with a "strike team" of twenty enforcers to force landlords to toe the line. Achtenberg declared in early February, "We are aware of the existing patterns of residential segregation that are so dramatic and pervasive in the L.A. area. That tends to lead one to believe that we should be on the lookout for additional acts of discrimination." She told the *Los Angeles Times*: "We will be a significant presence now and into the foreseeable future."

The 90-day eviction ban for Section 8 recipients epitomizes how federal welfare programs encourage the worst type of behavior in low-income citizens. At the same time that Achtenberg is demanding that Section 8 recipients be treated with respect and as equals, federal regulations encourage housing welfare recipients to become deadbeats and moochers. The more blacks and Hispanics rely on Section 8, the more landlords' resistance to Section 8 regulations could be portrayed by politicians as racial discrimination. Thus, the more social deviancy encouraged by government housing handouts and regulations, the more racism politicians claim to find.

Section 8 could be harming unsubsidized renters too, inflating rents for all Americans, according to a 1991 HUD report. As the *Washington Post* said: "The increases in fair market rent levels could . . . prove a bonanza for local landlords who will be able to receive higher rents from low-income subsidized renters than they would be able to get from moderate-income people." HUD analyst Irving Welfeld notes that

> the [Section 8] voucher program hurts those that it does not help. Most poor rely on the low end of the rental market for their housing. This is the sector that is in deep trouble because of the inability of unsubsidized poor tenants to pay the rents. . . . The voucher by drawing people out of these units and into the middle of the market is also pushing buildings off the market. The result of a weak market is the abandonment of buildings rather than lower rents. For those remaining it leaves the prospect of a smaller number of low rent units.

The *Hartford Courant* noted in 1992 that the provision of Section 8 subsidies to Hartford residents, allowing them

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to leave the city, "has begun to cripple city landlords, who are watching their buildings empty out and who are having more and more trouble paying their taxes. A significant movement of the poor out of the city would accelerate abandonment of residential buildings and threaten to undo recent gains of the 1980s in housing rehabilitation." Between 1990 and 1993, Hartford lost over 5 percent of its population—the sharpest population decline of any city in the nation.

A War on Advertising

The federal government's unfair housing campaign is increasingly degenerating into a war on freedom of speech. In the late 1960s, the phrase "No Jews allowed" in housing ads was considered illegal discrimination; in the 1990s, "Within walking distance to synagogue" is an actionable offense. Newspapers, developers, and realtors are increasingly being hammered by expansive interpretations of the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988.

HUD has an expansive interpretation of what constitutes an ad violation: "References to a synagogue, congregation or parish may . . . indicate a [illegal] religious preference. Names of facilities which cater to a particular racial, national origin or religious group such as country club or private school designations . . . may indicate a [illegal] preference." HUD even warns of lawsuits against housing developers who do not patronize foreign-language newspapers: "The use of English language media alone or the exclusive use of media catering to the majority population in an area, when, in such area, there are also available non-English language or other minority media, may have discriminatory impact."

HUD is increasingly punishing companies that fail to impose racial quotas in their use of models in real estate ads. It is illegal to use "photographs, drawings, or other graphic techniques . . . to indicate exclusiveness because of . . . handicap," among other factors. HUD requires that "models should be clearly definable as reasonably representing majority and minority groups in the metropolitan area, both sexes, and when appropriate, families with children," and that models "should portray persons in an equal social setting."

A federal jury in 1992 awarded $850,000 damages to a black Georgetown professor and two housing groups in a lawsuit they filed against an Arlington, Virginia, real estate developer who had used only white models in *Washington Post* advertisements. The *Post* succumbed to lawsuit threats and imposed upon advertisers a requirement that one in four models be a minority. In an August 1993 settlement, the *New York Times* announced that it would judge each real estate ad on a case-by-case basis, and that ads with a "substantial number" of people but fewer than 20 percent black people would be rejected.

In January 1990, Richard Jacobson placed a tiny classified ad in an Oconomowoc, Wisconsin newspaper stating:

> Fully Winterized Cottage, 2 bedrooms, ideal for couple. Not suitable for pets or children. Available February 1 or 15. Security deposit required.

The Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council saw the ad and filed a complaint with the Wisconsin Equal Rights Division, accusing Jacobson of illegally stating "a preference or limitation based on marital status in violation of the Wisconsin Open Housing Law." (Jacobson had rented the cottage to a single individual shortly after the ad appeared.)

The Equal Rights Division found Jacobson guilty, but he appealed to the Wisconsin Labor and Industry Review Commission, which acquitted him, ruling that "an ordinary reader would not have understood the advertisement to state or indicate discrimination." The Fair Housing Council, utilizing generous federal grants it receives to fuel its litigation, appealed the decision to Waukesha County Circuit Court, which also found Jacobson innocent. The Council then appealed to the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, which also found Jacobson innocent. Appeals Judge Daniel Anderson observed: "Such trifling complaints may well reduce available rental housing by having a chilling effect on potential landlords who would rather hold property off the market than risk the expense of defending against a complaint over innocuous and inoffensive advertisement."

A suit stemming from a Fair Housing advertisement complaint destroyed twenty-two newspapers in California. The HUD-funded California Fair Housing Council sued the Southern California Community Newspapers chain because one of its papers printed an apartment rental classified ad that stated "adults preferred." This phrase violated the 1988 Fair Housing Act Amendments, which prohibit "discrimination" against renters with children. The publisher, Ric Trent, offered the Fair Housing Council $50,000 in free advertis-

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ing to promote the need for fair housing, but the council refused. Fair Housing Council attorney Christopher Brancart observed, "We refused to settle this case because we felt the newspaper had an obligation to make things right in the community." Trent estimated that trial expenses for the ad violation would have cost him $500,000, so he filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The January 1993 shutdown destroyed over a hundred jobs.

Fair housing czar Achtenberg is intent on further constricting allowable language in housing advertisements. In February, two church-affiliated nursing homes in Minnesota announced that they had been required to expunge Christian crosses in their ads in the Yellow Pages as a result of HUD pressure on the Yellow Pages publishers. Several other Yellow Pages publishers admitted that they were being pressured by HUD to change their policy regarding religious symbols in ads for nursing homes. HUD backed down from its latest advertising crackdown after its efforts were exposed by the *Washington Times*.

Race, Crime, or Welfare?

Cisneros told a congressional committee last year, "The most destructive of the behaviors that affects urban America is racism." Cisneros and Achtenberg are already attempting to scapegoat suburban communities that resist incursions of public housing and Section 8 welfare recipients, and such criticism will likely greatly accelerate in the coming months. Cisneros has doubled spending for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program, which bankrolls local fair housing councils. The primary activity of many of the organizations is to send "testers"—one black, one white—to apartments to see if landlords refuse to rent or show apartments to blacks that are shown to whites.

HUD will also soon issue new regulations that could impose multi-million-dollar penalties on cities, counties, and states that do not aggressively enforce HUD's definitions of fair housing. Achtenberg intends to revolutionize the enforcement of fair housing regulations by forcing local governments to rely on an "effects test" of housing discrimination—basically claiming that any locale with significant separation of racial and income groups must be presumed to be in violation of fair housing laws. The Reagan and Bush administrations generally relied on an "intents test"—requiring that a conscious racially biased intent be proved before a fair housing violation could be said to exist.

There has never been a shortage of racism among some whites across this country—and it reared its contemptible head in a public-housing controversy recently, when the Ku Klux Klan protested the relocation of blacks into a public housing project in Vidor, Texas. But the fierce resistance in many locales to federally subsidized housing goes far beyond racism. According to a HUD report, *Crime in Public Housing*, "crime rates in public housing complexes are in some cases . . . ten times higher than the national average." HUD noted that the robbery rate at one Baltimore project was almost *twenty* times the national average. In the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago, the violent crime rate in 1993 was thirteen times the national average. The high crime rate in public housing can decimate the value of nearby private housing.

Government officials first allow crime at public housing projects to get out of control—and then denounce private citizens for their fear of it. Cisneros talks of the problems of public housing as if his proposal to disperse public housing residents will solve the crime problem. This assumes that public housing residents will be less likely to rob and steal if they are surrounded by more affluent neighbors.

When the administration has faced up to the problem of crime in public housing, its solution has consisted largely of giving government officials unlimited power to violate the rights of private citizens. The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) has conducted warrantless sweeps of residents' apartments, searching for guns and drugs. In a tour of a Chicago housing project on June 17, President Clinton endorsed the searches as a way to secure the residents' right to "freedom from fear." Yet he failed to address the most serious source of fear among public housing residents: the absence of adequate police protections. CHA officials have complained that they are forbidden by federal regulations from even checking if applicants for public housing have a criminal record.

HUD's scheme to use Section 8 to hand welfare recipients upper-middle-class housing will likely be a dismal failure. As Howard Husock, director of case studies at the Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*:

> Scattering subsidized housing breaks the unspoken rules of housing, and thus inspires bitter opposition. Public housing built in affluent or blue-collar neighborhoods allow families who have not followed the same route of upward mobility to share the reward. What is undermined is a defining aspect of middle-class life: accepting the discipline of work and family, as well as law and order, to attain, after a time, comfortable and secure surroundings. New public housing and the opposition it will appropriately inspire, is likely to stigmatize minority families generally—and make their gradual movement into the middle class more difficult.

In the 1960s, it was thought that a temporary burst of government aid would lift the poor once and for all. Now, we are debating where to distribute a permanent crime-ridden underclass that has been created by government programs. Cisneros and others are pretending that the high crime rates in public housing are the result of the number of stories in public housing complexes, rather than the web of irresponsibility and viciousness created by paying generations of people to become government dependents.

In Boston late last year, Cisneros warned: "We risk a societal collapse by the first decade of the next century if we tolerate racism and the economic isolation of millions of people." But the surest way to "economically isolate" people is to remove them from the workforce—and there's no better way to do that than to offer them an upper-middle-class lifestyle at bargain-basement prices. ❐

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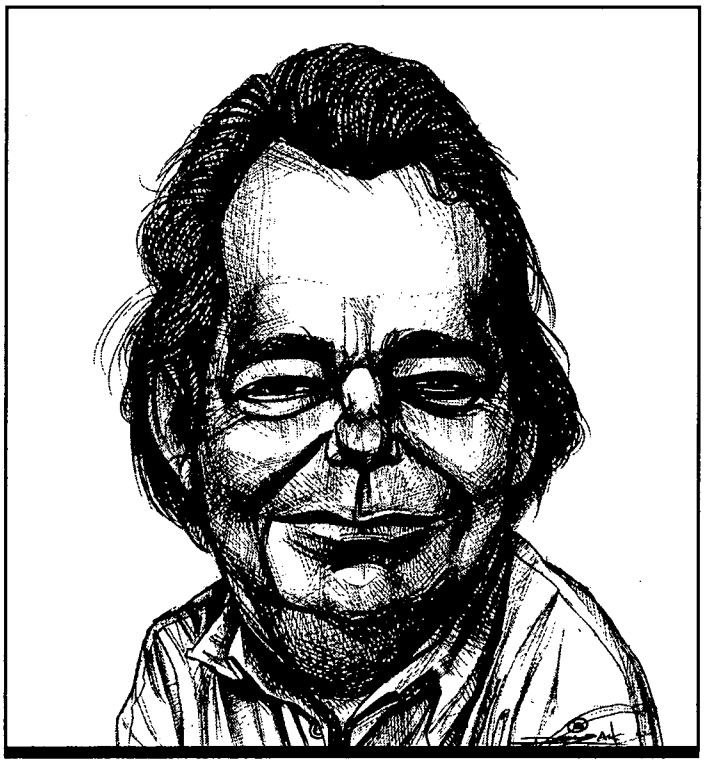
Mordecai Richler

Homeward Bound

Israel, viewed from Canada, and vice versa.



My wife and I arrived in Israel on October 11, 1992, and we were driven directly to Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the official municipal guest house for visiting artists and intellectuals. At a dinner party that night I learned that school children in Jerusalem are trained to summon the police immediately they discover an unattended parcel or carton anywhere on the street. Within minutes a police van will heave to, police with bullhorns will clear the area, and then a ramp will be lowered from the rear of the van, and a robot will be sent out to open what could be a bag of groceries or dirty laundry or, just possibly, a bomb. Another guest at the dinner party, an archaeologist, told us about an associate who had forgotten his briefcase on a bus. It was reported to the driver, everybody was disembarked, and the bus was driven to a secluded area. And then the man's Ph.D. thesis, the work of several years, was blown to bits.

Our hostess lived in a nondescript concrete apartment block in Jerusalem's Ramat Eshkol district. "People are beginning to look for apartments elsewhere," she said, "because the *schwartsers* have begun to move in."

In Israel, the ultra-orthodox are variously known as *schwartsers*, blacks, or black coats.

"You're going to think this is terrible of me, but the truth is they smell so bad. They can't help it. Those clothes. This heat. What can I say? Then I take out the car on Saturday morning and there they are, with their ten children, shaking their fists at me and shouting *shabbes!* You know, one day, at the rate they're going, they will outnumber all of us, and what then?"

Back in our apartment, unable to sleep, I read the *Jerusalem Post* in bed. It paid tribute to cartoonist Noah Mordechai Birzowski, who had just turned 75. A contributor, since 1940, to the *Palestine Post*, as it then was, and other Israeli newspapers, Birzowski signed his name Noah Bee. One of the cartoons reproduced for the tribute was in two frames with the headline "Final Solutions." The first frame showed Jews in striped concentration camp uni-

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Mordecai Richler is the author of Oh Canada! Oh Quebec! Requiem for a Divided Country *(Alfred A. Knopf) and many novels, including* The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, Joshua Then and Now, *and* Solomon Gursky Was Here. *This essay is adapted with permission from his latest book,* This Year in Jerusalem, *to be published in September by Knopf.*

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forms lining up to be consumed in a crematorium, smoke billowing out of its tall chimney. The second frame was a drawing of a couple being married in church, standing before a crucifix, with the footnote "Intermarriage." I did not wake up Florence, my Protestant bride of thirty-three years, mother of our five children, to show it to her. However, it did occur to me that had Bee been a cartoonist for *The Catholic Herald*, and had he drawn a mixed-marriage couple clasping hands before a Star of David, and equated it with genocide, the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League would have been on his case in a jiffy, accusing him of racism. Actually, our half-breed children solved the problem of their dual religious provenance years ago. There are three boys and two girls. When our eldest daughter, Emma, was a mere 10-year-old, she informed her brothers, "You guys are Jewish, but the girls aren't."

Finally I drifted off to sleep conjuring up an image of Major General Orde Wingate in Palestine in the thirties, lying naked in his tent, combing out his pubic hairs with a toothbrush, as was his habit, and instructing eager Jewish youngsters, Moshe Dayan among them, in guerrilla night tactics. Wingate, who went on to become a Second World War hero in Burma, leader of the irregular Chindits, a mixed force of British and Gurkha troops, had a Hebrew code name in Palestine in the thirties: *hayedid*, the friend. On December 31, 1937, he wrote to his cousin Sir Reginald Wingate: "The administration of Palestine and Transjordan is, to a man, anti-Jew and pro-Arab. This is largely due to the fact that we seem to send only the worst type of British official to Palestine. They hate the Jew and like the Arab who, although he shoots at them, toadies to them and takes care to flatter their sense of importance."

Given to messianic fantasies, Wingate dreamed of being a latter-day Moses, leading the Jews in a military campaign to re-establish them in their historic homeland, but he died in an airplane crash in Burma in 1944. In 1948, during the Israeli War of Independence, his widow flew over a battle in progress at Deganiah and dropped her husband's Bible on the field. Wingate was a first cousin of T.E. Lawrence.

Montreal, 1944. After my parents divorced, my mother, obliged to earn money, rented out the back bedroom of our cold-water flat on St. Urbain Street and cooked for a refugee who had escaped from Austria immediately before the *Anschluss*. Two years later, she placed a small ad in the Montreal *Star* offering "delicious, strictly kosher meals at a reasonable price in a warm, family atmosphere." Eventually Hoppenheim, Putterschnit, and Stein became regulars at our table. Hoppenheim and Putterschnit were bachelors and Stein was a widower. However, the first person to ring our doorbell, in response to my mother's ad, was an emaciated, timorous, impeccably dressed, middle-aged man. A *goy!*

"What do you want here?" my mother demanded.

Mr. Sullivan indicated the folded copy of the *Star* in his hand, my mother's ad circled with a pencil.

"But this is a Jewish home," said my mother, "and we only serve Jewish food here."

Mr. Sullivan doffed his pearl gray fedora and asked, "May I come in, madam?"

"It's eighty cents if it's fish, but a dollar five when I'm serving meat. In both cases, soup and dessert come with."

This seemed agreeable to Mr. Sullivan, but my mother still blocked his path. "And we don't serve liquor here."

Mr. Sullivan, who worked at the neighborhood branch of the City and District Savings Bank, frequented our table on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was noted that he ate with his fork upside down, he wore spats, and on evenings when my mother joined the men for dessert, he would rise from his chair until she was seated.

Mr. Sullivan, who worked at the neighborhood branch of the City and District Savings Bank, frequented our table on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was noted that he ate with his fork upside down, he wore spats, and on evenings when my mother joined the men for dessert, he would rise from his chair until she was seated. The others at the table were too intimidated to banter in Yiddish in his presence, and felt obliged, in deference to his manner, to eat without loosening their ties or removing their jackets. Grabbing was also out. "Would you mind passing the bread, sir," Hoppenheim might say. Or, with just a hint of menace, "Would you care for the last slice of potato kugel, sir?"

I served the meals and Mr. Sullivan unfailingly tucked a dime or fifteen cents, depending on whether it was a meat or fish night, under his tea saucer for me. To begin with, I pocketed the money with exaggerated ceremony for the benefit of Hoppenheim, Putterschnit, and Stein. Unavailingly, as it turned out. Putterschnit explained, "Listen here, you're not a real waiter, but by the owner a son, and this isn't even a restaurant."

Mr. Sullivan, who had lost his only son in the battle of the Falaise Gap, in 1944, took an interest in me. He brought me City and District Savings Bank blotters, a calendar, and once two baseball tickets that a customer had given him. One night he asked, "Will you be attending university here?"

"That depends. You see, I'm an active Zionist and could

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be called up to serve in our army in Palestine any time after my eighteenth birthday."

From 1944 through 1948, I was a member of Habonim, a Zionist youth group rooted in socialist doctrine. Our rambling, three-story meeting house was on Jeanne Mance Street, in the heart of Montreal's old working-class Jewish quarter. Slouching toward Habonim meetings with my *chaverim* (comrades), Jerry, Hershey, and Myer, the four of us puffing on Sweet Caps, became a Friday night ritual that continued unbroken through four years of high school. At the time, we were all pledged to make *aliyah* (the ascent to Israel), but none of us ever made it. In 1950, I dropped out of college, sailing for Paris rather than Tel Aviv. Staring into the molten, heaving seas late at night on the deck of the *Franconia*, I feared that any moment I might be confronted by Ezra Lifshitz, my former Habonim group leader who had made aliyah. "You're sailing for the wrong port, chaver. Shame on you."

Returning to our apartment, I paused by the Arab bread vendor's cart, opposite the Yemin Moshe windmill, to buy a horseshoe-shaped loaf that is sold with a pinch of *za'atar* (hyssop) wrapped in a twist of newspaper. "How much is that?" I asked.

"For Americans," he replied, his manner jovial, "only a hundred bucks." But he accepted five shekels.

My cousin Sam Orbaum, a *Jerusalem Post* reporter, told me that the loaf is called a *beigele* by both Arab and Jew. It is also commonplace, he said, for Arab junk collectors, passing through Jewish neighborhoods on their donkey-drawn wagons, to call out "*Alte zachen* (old things)," a Yiddish cry familiar to me from my St. Urbain Street boyhood, but which some Israeli youngsters take to be Arabic. Israeli kids, for their part, frequently borrow from the Arabic, saying "*mapsut*" for "satisfied" and "ya'ani" for "let's go" or "come on." Descending the stone steps to Mishkenot, I met two robed, middle-aged Arab sweepers leaning on their brooms. "*Shalom*," said one, and the other smiled and said, "*Chaq somaich*." Happy holiday.

(Eight months later, back in our cottage on Lake Memphremagog in Quebec's Eastern Townships, where the worst menace is deer chewing on our cedars, I would read in the *Montreal Gazette* that on July 16, 1993, Bathsheva Hillel, a 57-year-old woman, had been stabbed five times in the back, apparently by a terrorist, in the neighborhood of Yemin Moshe near Mishkenot. Witnesses said they saw two Arabs fleeing the area.)

One morning, accompanied by Paul Workman, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Middle Eastern correspondent, and Azur Mizrachi, his cameraman, I set out for Dheisheh, a Palestinian refugee camp. Our first stop was to be the field offices of the United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), at Sheikh Jarrah, in Jerusalem. En route, we geared down to creep necessarily slow through the teeming market square opposite the Damascus Gate that was a hodgepodge of rickety wagons laden with vegetables or junk, ancient trucks with panting engines, bicycles, and donkey-carts and lined with hole-in-the-wall cafés, bakeries, and butcher shops, the signs in Arabic. Arab workers out of Gaza congregate here, waiting to be picked up by Israeli contractors who will provide a day's work on one building site or another. At UNRWA, we were directed to the office of Public Information Officer, where we were confronted by an insufferably elegant Sandro Tucci. "Whom do you wish to talk to in Dheisheh?" he asked.

I failed to respond immediately. Then, his manner that of a bored *maître d'* of human suffering, he began to recite specialities that were not listed on the menu. "I can offer you a young man who had part of his jaw shot off, a recent widow, a boy who came out of prison crippled."

Then, his manner that of a bored maître d' *of human suffering, he began to recite specialities that were not listed on the menu. "I can offer you a young man who had part of his jaw shot off, a recent widow, a boy who came out of prison crippled."*

I was tempted to ask if he took Amex? Visa? Instead, I said, "If possible, I'd like to talk to people who haven't already been interviewed again and again."

Turning to his assistant, Marina Barham, he said, "Take him to the homes of Nihad 'Odeh and Mohammed Abu 'Aker." Miss Barham, an intelligent, young Palestinian Christian, who spoke fluent English, was to serve as my guide and translator.

Dheisheh lies on the main road out of Jerusalem, through Bethlehem, to Hebron, with its overhanging settlers' suburb of Kiryat Arba. Israelis, tooling past the camp, usually accelerate, lest they be stoned, their cars readily identifiable by their license plates, which are a different color from those of Palestinians from the occupied territories: the former are yellow, the latter blue.

As we drove through the Jerusalem quarter of Talpiot, Miss Barham pointed out a sizable detached stone house. "That was our family house until '67," she said, "and every time we pass, I see it. My grandfather still keeps a key to the front door."

Spanish Jews, I remembered, expelled by the edict of the Catholic monarchs in 1492, also held on to their front door keys, sometimes passed down through the generations.

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Miss Barham did not have an Israeli or Jordanian passport, but only a *laissez-passer* issued by the Israeli government. "Two months after I applied for a passport," she said, "I was invited to meet with an Israeli intelligence officer in a room in the King Solomon Hotel. He told me not to tell my parents that I was seeing him. He knew everything about me. It was a pleasure, he said, to talk to such a well-educated young woman. He offered me immunity. Privileges. Money. A diplomatic passport. If only I would agree to inform on Palestinians abroad. Don't worry, he said, I wouldn't have to inform on my friends. But if there was a conference somewhere, I would just have to say who was there, and where were they staying. Little things like that. No harm in it. He attempted to recruit me three times, but each time I said no. Finally, after a three month wait, I got my *laissez-passer*."

In June 1991, UNRWA estimated that there were 430,083 registered refugees rooted on the West Bank, of which 114,763 lived in twenty different camps. Dheisheh, its official population 8,048, was surrounded by a six-meter-high fence, entry and exit possible through a narrow turnstile.

There were two Israeli Defense Force (IDF) bases opposite Dheisheh, four observation posts mounted on roofs within the camp, and the narrow hilly streets were regularly monitored by three patrols, made up of six to eight soldiers each. Established as a tent city in 1949, Dheisheh had its first houses constructed in 1954. Now its residents, making a political statement, would not allow any renovations, and neither would they agree to be moved, unless it was back to the villages they had fled or been evicted from in 1948. Climbing the hilly dirt road to Nihad 'Odeh's flat, we passed fly-ridden mounds of decaying refuse, cannibalized hulks of rusting cars, abandoned mattresses bleeding stuffing, and piles of rubble. An aged robed Arab sat on a stool outside a poky shop displaying boxes of fruits and vegetables, and a couple of shelves of canned goods. Another old Arab, intent on his Koran, squatted before opened cartons of Marlboros and packages of razor blades.

Nihad 'Odeh, a pretty, 34-year-old widow, attired in an embroidered green kaftan, had been warned in advance of our visit. She invited us to sit down in her living room, and then went off to prepare Turkish coffee. Her flat, part of a cinderblock row, was made up of a tiny kitchen with a tiled floor, two bedrooms, and two sitting rooms. The furnishings were wretched. Framed verses from the Koran hung on one wall. The plaster of Paris model of the Dome on the Rock that sat on a side table was inscribed, "If you support God, God will support you." Photographs of Nihad's late husband were everywhere. The most conspicuous was crudely colored and had a purple paper valentine pasted on it. Nihad joined us, poured the coffee, and sat down to tell her tale.

"My husband worked in construction in Saudi Arabia. On May 9, 1988, he was on vacation at a time when I was six months pregnant. There were clashes in the camp. A disturbance. The soldiers were here. I had gone to the kitchen to prepare some food when I heard shots. My husband also heard the shots and he went to the window to see what was happening. He was shot through the head by a soldier. Look," she said, indicating the hole in a windowpane that had never been replaced, "the bullet hole." Then she swept a pillow from a tattered sofa. "And look, the blood. His blood. That's Ibrahim's blood. He was dead by the time they got him to the hospital and I would not allow an autopsy because the Jews use the body parts."

Marina, responding to my skeptical look, said, "It is a very true suspicion."

At least, I thought, we no longer poisoned wells or required the blood of Christian babes for our Passover matzohs, but I said nothing.

Nihad was the mother of four sons and four daughters. "Ibrahim was only 38 years old when he was murdered," she said. He was the camp's first martyr of the *intifada*." Marina explained that following the death of a martyr the PLO provides the widow with a pension of $100 a month, but she must go to Jordan to collect it.

"The military told me that only close relatives could come to Ibrahim's funeral," said Nihad. "Twenty to forty people at the most was all they would allow. There was a curfew—soldiers—four hundred people came. Helicopters flew overhead. There was a clash with the soldiers and seventy people were injured. Eighty were arrested. Afterward I would wake up in the morning and I would find food on my doorstep. My husband was shot for no reason. I complained to a human rights organiza-

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tion. I asked for compensation. The military governor came to see me. 'Maybe a neighbor shot your husband,' he said. Then there was an investigation and six days later he was here again. 'We are very sorry,' he said. 'Please accept our apologies.' And then he pointed at my swollen belly and said, 'I hope you have a boy and you call him Ibrahim.'"

Ibrahim and Nihad's families had both fled their village in 1948, fearful of the approaching Israeli army. "Later," she said, "we regretted it. I've been here for forty years and I expect nothing. Every three or four days they call for a 24-hour curfew."

But did she not hope, I asked, that one day there would be a peace settlement?

"We will never give up Jerusalem. Jerusalem is sacred to all Muslims. It is our second holiest site."

I didn't correct her, but I did venture that Jerusalem was also sacred to Jews.

"The Jews haven't suffered as we have. We fight with stones. They have guns. Many of our children have lost their fathers."

Outside, I trailed behind Paul and Marina with Azur, a Jew whose family had been obliged to flee Syrian oppression. He spoke fluent Arabic. "Is Marina translating everything correctly," I asked, "or is she doing a number on me?"

"She's doing an honest job," he said, "but widows get more than $100 a month from the PLO and they don't have to go to Jordan to collect it. On the other hand, since the Gulf War, the PLO has been cut off by Saudi Arabia and others, and Palestinian workers have been deported from Kuwait, another loss of income. So now I don't know."

Even as I luxuriated in guilt, I had to acknowledge a deeper feeling, one that I hadn't plucked out of my liberal convenience store. I was grateful that for once in our history, we were the ones with the guns and they were the ones with the stones.

We moved on through an alley strewn with rubble to the house of Mohammed Abu 'Aker and Aba Nidal Abu 'Aker. It was, I could see at once, considerably more prosperous, if only on the Dheisheh scale. There was a large new TV set in evidence. A Sony ghetto blaster. A telephone. Electric fans. A decent sofa and armchairs. We had come on a day of mourning, the second anniversary of the death of Abu 'Aker's 19-year-old son Mohammed. The living room's centerpiece was an idealized, but crudely drawn portrait of Mohammed, underneath which was written:

YOUR HEART IS BEATING,
INTIFADA IS VERY STRONG.

A family group awaited us. Mohammed's ancient, shriveled grandmother, his grieving parents, his two brothers and a sister. The right arm of one of the brothers was freshly bandaged right up to the elbow. Mohammed's mother, Aba Nidal Abu 'Aker, wore a scarf with PLO colors. A plump, excitable matriarch of substance, black eyes smouldering, she was the one chosen to recite the family's tale, and such was her puissance no sooner did she start than the living room was transformed into a theater. When Mohammed was only 15 years old, she said, he was already active in the *intifada*. One of the stone-throwers. "He was arrested and held in prison, where he was tortured. He was confined in a cell where there wasn't enough room for him to lie down or stand properly. They placed a black sack over his head. They beat him. They made him suffer electric shocks. From time to time they would waken him out of a deep sleep and serve him soup in a dirty bowl. He was released by the courts after three months, but when he was 16 he was imprisoned again, this time for a month. He hadn't been out for very long when the soldiers came for him another time. But he was in hiding. My two other sons, who were both in prison then, saw my picture in an Israeli newspaper, and read how the reporter wrote that I had been beaten with sticks when the soldiers came to search our house. They searched my house every night, but Mohammed was staying with his grandmother and only came home for a bath. One night the soldiers came when he was here, but he escaped, the soldiers running after him. And now they knew he came home to bathe in the evening, and they hid, waiting for him. The next day he was to be here at eight in the evening and there was to be a demonstration at ten. We heard two shots, very close to the house, and then a girl came running. 'Mohammed's been shot,' she said. He was shot with a dum-dum bullet, which exploded in his abdomen. These bullets are against the law. Mohammed was taken to the hospital, where the doctors were surprised that he was still alive. We went to a human rights organization and Mohammed was allowed to fly to the United States for treatment. My husband accompanied him to a hospital in Boston. Mohammed lived for two years after he was shot on life-sustaining machines."

Aba Nidal Abu 'Aker nodded, and her husband passed me photographs of their wasting son lying on a hospital bed. "His weight dropped from sixty-five kilos to thirty kilos," she said. "He was only 19 years old when he died two years ago today."

Outside, a muezzin called the faithful to prayer. Mohammed Abu 'Aker, responding to a nod from his wife, said he suffered from a debilitating heart condition and worked

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in a gas station in the Jewish settlement of Zar Hadas. "We come from a village near Jerusalem," he said, "where I used to own eight thousand dumas of land."

Before we left the house, we were each handed an envelope with an invitation to that afternoon's memorial service for Mohammed.

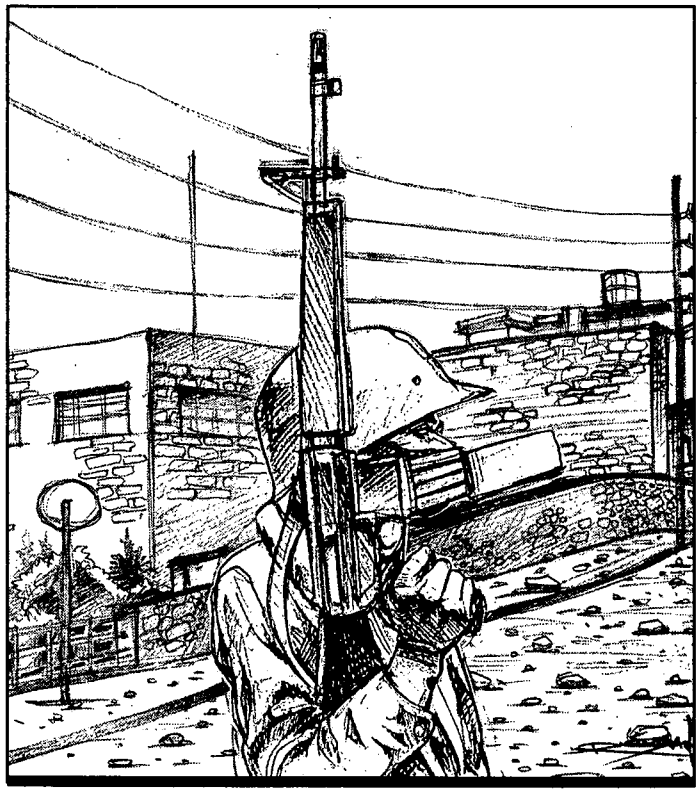
Descending a slope to our car, which we had left outside Dheisheh's fence, we were careful to avoid patches made slippery by rotting garbage. "How can he afford that house," I asked Marina, "the TV set, the radio, on a gasoline station worker's salary?"

"He is probably helped by relatives who work in the oil fields or maybe even America."

Paul drove back to the UNWRA camp with Marina and then Azur and I proceeded to Kiryat Arba, where we were scheduled to meet with the West Bank settlers' most eloquent advocate, the ferocious Elyakim Ha'etzni. "You won't care for what he has to say. Neither do I," said Azur. "But he is nobody's fool."

"Do you think Abu 'Aker really owned all that much land and had it taken from him?" I asked.

"Where do you start here and where do you stop? How far back can we go in making amends? Sure many Palestinians were evicted from their villages. Land was appropriated. But my family had to leave millions behind when they fled Syria. Other Jews came out of Yemen, Libya, and Egypt with nothing but what they could carry. One of our problems is that most foreigners, and even some Jews who have never been here, think you have to hike for a mile or cross a river or climb over a mountain to reach the West Bank. They don't realize it's just around the corner. It begins across the street. It's right here."



Feigning sleep, I brooded over Nihad 'Odeh's heartfelt declaration, torn from the rock of her misery: *The Jews haven't suffered as we have. We fight with stones. They have guns. Many of our children have lost their fathers.*

And once again, in my mind's eye, I was cutting through the lane to the Habonim meeting house on Jeanne Mance Street, horsing around with Jerry, Hershey, and Myer. Then we passed the home of my obdurate grandfather, Shmariyahu Richler, who sat on the balcony, catching the evening breeze, the local Yiddish daily newspaper, *Die Keneder Adler*, on his lap. Was he, I now wondered, sitting out there pondering the fate of those Richlers left behind in Rawa-Ruska, a Galician shtetl? At the time he could not have known that the sick, concealed in holes, had been rounded up in an SS *Aktion*. Or that several hundred of Rawa-Ruska's Jews had been herded into a barn that was surrounded by machine gunners and then set on fire, those fleeing the inferno being gunned down for sport.

Once, my grandfather had raised the shutters of his rolltop desk and showed me the revolver that had been his when he had served in the army of the Emperor Franz-Josef. According to family legend, a great-uncle on my mother's side of the family had shattered one of his testicles on a blacksmith's anvil to avoid being conscripted into the army of the Czar. From 1825 to 1855, during the reign of Nicholas I, Jewish children in the Pale of Settlement, from the ages of 12 to 18, were taken from their parents and press-ganged into the army for periods of up to twenty-five years. In 1899, following a pogrom in Jassy, Romania, the *fussgeyer* movement was born. Bands of able-bodied young Jewish men, marching in double-file, knapsacks on their backs, tramped hundreds of miles to the port of Hamburg, and from there sailing steerage to America. On the road, they sang the "Song of the Fusgeyer":

Geyt, yideleh, in der vayter velt;
in kanade vet ir ferdinen gelt.
[Go, little Jews, in the wide world;
in Canada you will earn a living.]

Running through this heritage of outrages and endurance in my head, not forgetting the 1903 pogrom in Kishinev, when the murder of a mere forty-nine Jews qualified as a "massacre." Or the Black Hundreds. Or *Kristallnacht*. Or Vichy's Pierre Laval rounding up 13,000 Parisian Jews on July 16, 1942, 3,000 children among them, and locking them up in the Winter Velodrome, until they could be retrieved by the Gestapo. Or the conference at Wansee that led to the Final Solution.

Sending buckets down the well of my Jewish provenance, I still had to allow that Nihad 'Odeh and Aba Nidal Abu 'Aker were not culpable. They could not be blamed. Worse news. Big-bellied, black-eyed Aba Nidal Abu 'Aker, endlessly rocking, keening, but also relishing the importance injustice had bestowed on her, rendering

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her mother of a martyr; was unnervingly reminiscent of the St. Urbain Street grandmothers of my boyhood, spinning their sorrowful tales of the Old Country. Instead of drunken Cossacks wielding swords, IDF delinquents with dum-dum bullets. Even as I luxuriated in guilt, I had to acknowledge a deeper feeling, one that I hadn't plucked out of my liberal convenience store. I was grateful that for once in our history, we were the ones with the guns and they were the ones with the stones. But, taking it a step further, I also found myself wishing that if Jerry, Hershey, Myer and I had been born and bred in the squalor of Dheisheh rather than the warmth of St. Urbain Street, we might have had the courage to be among the stone-throwers.

En route to Elyakim Ha'etzni's house, we stopped for a beer at a street-corner canteen in Kiryat Arba. It was a kosher canteen run by a good-natured young man with corkscrew sidecurls, a follower of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

"So," said Azur, teasing, his manner affectionate, "when is the *moshiach* [messiah] coming?"

"Soon, soon."

"Is it the Rebbe?" I asked.

"If the Rebbe is not the *moshiach*," he said, "then surely he is the one who will proclaim him."

Kiryat Arba was established on a rock-strewn slope in 1969 by Rabbi Moshe Levinger and forty *haredi* families, and was officially recognized as a settlement by the government a year later. Today, although ringed by barbed wire and watchtowers, it is a pretty, prosperous town, home to some 5,000 settlers surrounded by hostile Arabs, no settler more visible than the lawyer Elyakim Ha'etzni. Ha'etzni, a former representative in the Knesset is a member of the Tehiya Party. Founded in 1979, Tehiya is fiercely dedicated to saving Judea and Samaria from those "treacherous" doves who would swap land for peace, the "dastardly" Yitzhak Rabin in particular, who might yet enter history, Ha'etzni once wrote, "as a second Rehoboam who had helped fatally divide his people and his land," and might even add his Jewish name "to those of Nebuchadnezzer and Titus, who exiled the Jews from Bethlehem, Shilo, Beit El and Hebron."

My cousin Sam Orbaum had provided me with the *Jerusalem Post* file on the truculent Ha'etzni.

In August 1992 Ha'etzni filed a complaint against the Israeli Broadcasting Authority for allowing the Palestinian spokesman, Faisel Husseini, to present his case on the Moked interview program. "The government is going to have a very hard time," he said, "legitimizing the presentation of the PLO's chief leader inside this country."

The same month, in a *Post* op-ed piece that anticipated the forthcoming meeting between Prime Minister Rabin and then President Bush, Ha'etzni warned against granting the Palestinians even limited autonomy, a license, he wrote, for an Arab police force made up of former "masked, hatchet-bearing murderers." He also complained that "today, owing to American pressure, Arabs are allowed to build freely whenever they wish, while Jews [on the West Bank] cannot build even privately financed homes. Will this new American definition of 'civil rights' and 'nondiscrimination,' this new racism directed against Jews, prevail during the five years of 'Autonomy'? Will the Arabs have free access to state-owned land, while the Jews remain cooped up in their chicken-pens waiting for slaughter?"

In another op-ed piece, published in the *Post*, Ha'etzni noted that by freezing funds for the settlers, "The State of Israel has achieved normalcy. At last it has its 'Jews,' its scapegoats, the ever-guilty, the chosen-and-rejected, those who always make news. The settlers are the Jewish State's Jews."

Azur and I had a 2 p.m. appointment to meet Ha'etzni at his house in Kiryat Arba. We arrived right on time, but he had either forgotten about us, or his after lunch snooze had lasted longer than he intended. We had to ring the doorbell several times before a sleepy-eyed Ha'etzni greeted us in his undershirt. His displeasure obvious, he grudgingly showed us into his living room, and then excused himself to retrieve his shirt. Born in Kiel, in Schleswig-Holstein, in 1926, Ha'etzni had come to Israel in 1938. He was tall, big-featured, lanky, with a shock of gray hair, steel-rimmed glasses, and huge protruding ears: a man who clearly had no time for idle chitchat or an exchange of civilities. Before he even sat down, he pointed at the sculpture of an unwinding black snake on the top of his TV set, glared at me, and said, "The media belongs to the left. That snake you see coming out of my TV is not there by accident."

I mentioned that we had spent the morning at Dheisheh.

"The real goal of the Arabs is to drive the Jews into the sea," he said. "They only discovered that they were Palestinians after the Zionists built a state here. We have already given up three-quarters of Palestine, which they call Jordan, and where the so-called Palestinians make up seventy per cent of the population. Look outside," he said, indicating a large picture window, "and you will see the Judaean hills. Our historical land, our political entitlement coming from the Bible. Why should I give it up? Why should I be exiled to live in the Diaspora, in Tel Aviv, on the Philistine plains?"

Ha'etzni spoke effortless English with a pronounced German accent. But he had the disconcerting, and intimidating, habit of shouting at two people in a living room, his voice often flirting with hysteria, as if, in his mind's eye, he was poised on a balcony, hectoring the multitudes milling below. In fact, at one point I was tempted to shout back, "Ha'etzni! Ha'etzni!" just to see if he would acknowledge the chant by raising his arms aloft.

"Arab children are severely beaten for anything," he

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said. "We are not for transfer. But we should take the families of those children who throw stones and send them into exile. After ten such cases there would be no more stone-throwing. This is the advice I got from the Arabs themselves," he said, watchful, his eyes taunting. "They probably told you in Dheisheh about the policy of home demolition where arms were found or terrorists were hidden. What they didn't tell you is that, immediately a home is demolished, they get money from the PLO to build another one. The Arabs are different from us for three reasons. One, they have no regard for human life. Human life is cheap for them. Two, they will kill anybody, not necessarily the perpetrator. Three, they are terrorists who favor indiscriminate killings of innocent civilians."

In Dheisheh, I said, I had heard complaints about torture.

"A certain amount of physical pressure is permitted in dealing with terrorists. But, yes, there is police brutality in Tel Aviv. A state is a machinery for oppression, even a Jewish state. Some of the new conscripts in the army suffer from sadism. Look here, what a Jewish state is all about is to enable us to be the same as everybody else. Why must we prove to be better? We were rewarded for that with Auschwitz. So I needn't excel any more. I don't have to show how good I am."

Ha'etzni pointed out that he often acted for the Arabs in Hebron, defending them in court. "They are not trash. They shouldn't be humiliated, having to wait by the roadside to be picked up for construction jobs. Arabs have a saying that a hungry cat is a tiger. I am in favor of equal pay for equal work. We should have raised dramatically the health standards of the Arabs. Unfortunately, as things stand, there is a very big difference between Jewish hospitals and Arab hospitals."

I asked Ha'etzni if he was in favor of returning the Golan Heights to Syria.

"Even with the Golan, every one of our kibbutzim is fenced in. There are fences around all the Jewish settlements, because we are the object of attacks. Labor didn't win a majority of the Jewish votes. To give back the Golan is suicide. It is putting a bullet to our heads. Suckers that we are, we are sick in our minds. In '67 the Arabs said let the sword judge between us. So now you have it! We have filled the graveyards with our children, and they must pay. Tell me," he said, his voice rising, "why a Jewish war should be different from others, and why we should return our territorial gains? Will the Americans give back New Mexico? Texas? California?"

But what if Rabin did trade land for peace, I asked, and the West Bank settlements had to be abandoned?

"Then," he said, "there will be civil war. Let's see if our children will come to kill me."

Unhappily the driver who was to take us to Masada turned out to be a direct spiritual descendant of the tiresome Mr. Glickstein, the member of the Zionist Executive in Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*, who is seldom without his "propaganda smile." From the moment he picked us up at Mishkenot, through the two-hour drive to Masada, our visit to that astonishing site, and the trip back, he never stopped nattering, overwhelming us with statistics, pointing out every Israeli miracle on either side of the road, watching closely for our reactions in his rear-view mirror. We tooled past greenhouses, where resourceful farmers, exposing their plants to 24-hours of artificial light, grew tomatoes from seed to fruition in six weeks. "Imagine that, Mr. Richler." Yes, but I had purchased some of those sickly pink tomatoes in Montreal and they had tasted of nothing more than water and pulp. He slowed down to show us where there would be a pipeline one day, pumping desalinated sea water into the desert, making it bloom. We stopped at another place where, once the money was available, waste water from Israeli toilets would be chemically treated to heat a city yet to be built.

"Tell me," I asked, "have you guys ever thought of bottling Israeli piss and marketing it abroad as perfume?"

"My husband was only joking," said Florence.

"Sabra cologne. Essence of Dizengoff cooking oil. Gaza Strip after shave. Scent of the black-coats."

Late one afternoon I sat in the bar of the Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv waiting for Hillel Halkin, an American-born writer and translator who had made *aliyah* in 1970. I had been unable to find a copy of his out-of-print book, *Letters to an American Jewish*

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Friend: A Zionist Polemic, published in the seventies, but I was familiar with the argument at its core: it was, as put by Halkin himself, "that for any Jew in this day and age who cares about being Jewish, the only honest place to live is Israel." My God, here was a writer who in one sentence managed to impugn the honor of nearly seven million Jews who feel at home in North America, never mind the others at ease in the United Kingdom, Australia, France, and elsewhere. And, in the same sentence, he also managed to dismiss as uncaring about their Jewish heritage, and necessarily dishonest, a far from uninteresting bunch, say, Saul Bellow, Cynthia Ozick, Philip Roth, Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, Alfred Kazin, Susan Sontag, Joseph Heller, Woody Allen, Anita Brookner, Daniel Bell, Bernice Reubens, Leonard Michaels, Alan Ginsberg, Dan Jacobson, Frederic Raphael, Harold Pinter, John Gross, and the late Irving Howe, Bernard Malamud, and Isaac Bashevis Singer, among others.

Ruminating over why so many American Jews had failed to make *aliyah*, Halkin wrote in a *Jerusalem Report* column, "Jews are no different from other people in putting their comfort first—they are only different in feeling so embarrassed about it that they will resort to almost any myth or rationalization before admitting their true motives. They have, in a word, just enough idealism to lie to themselves systematically, which is why preaching Zionism to them is a waste of time."

Waiting for the presumptuous author of such a self-serving *pensée* to appear, I anticipated a fierce quarrel. Obviously Halkin was a stranger to self-doubt, but could he really believe that I lived in Canada only because I was a slacker and a sybarite and not because it was my home and, therefore, a country I cared about more deeply than Israel, for that matter?

In the event, Halkin turned out to be a gentle, soft-spoken man. It was with the most disarming of smiles, albeit tainted by condescension, that he said to me, "Jews have a choice. They can either make *aliyah* or assimilate."

"Either/or? Nothing but?"

"Yes. However, I have no quarrel with those who have chosen assimilation."

Halkin's assumption that it was impossible to lead a full Jewish life in America, or the U.K., was unnerving. Zionist zealots and anti-Semites, those most unlikely of bedfellows, share an undeniably racist article of faith, the odious notion that Jews born and bred in North America, or other Western countries, can never be bona fide citizens of their homelands. In *With Friends Like You: What Israelis Really Think About American Jews*, Matti Golan argued for "the importance of Israel not as a Jewish home, but as a *home*, period. The difference between our two mentalities is the difference between someone who lives at home and someone who lives in a rented room. The family you rent from may be the kindest and nicest you could wish for, but you still have to behave yourself and stay in its good graces if you don't want to be out of a room."

Another day Florence and I went to lunch with Bubbi Zerwanitzer, a documentary film maker in his sixties. Bubbi was a cultivated man. A *mensch* who hadn't shucked what too many smart-ass Israelis disdain as "ghetto hang-ups," and what others, myself included, cherish as *neshuma*, soul. A melancholy Jew, Bubbi's heart was laden with guilt, some of it his, still more harvested. "The Arabs were here for a thousand years," he said, "more, and we moved many of them out. Morally, they are in the right."

I told him about my meeting with Ha'etzni.

"There are crazies on both sides," he said. "Enough. More than enough. But, unfortunately, he is right about one thing. The biblical land of Israel *is* the West Bank."

Sifting through my notebooks in the bar of the Dan Hotel that evening, I was suddenly overcome by homesickness for my nearly empty, unspeakably rich, sinfully misgoverned country.

The insensitivity of some of the recent Russian immigrants troubled him, but so did their plight. "There are Russians," he said, "who are only off the plane for an hour and they want to know what are so many Arabs doing in our land? We must have something like 10,000 musicians here now, most of them second-class, and now reduced to playing their violins or singing on street corners, because how many teaching jobs are available in such a small country? The man who delivers my groceries was a doctor in Leningrad. Do I tip him? I tip him. Yes, I tip him. But I can't look him in the eye. I lower my eyes. I am so ashamed for him."

Sifting through my notebooks in the bar of the Dan Hotel that evening, I was suddenly overcome by homesickness for my nearly empty, unspeakably rich, sinfully misgoverned country. Suffering from a surfeit of Israel's seemingly insoluble dilemmas, I longed for the familiar nursery school name-calling between English and French—*our* two founding races, so to speak—not the progeny of Sarah and Hagar, but of dispossessed Highland sheep farmers and peasants out of Brittany and Normandy. I yearned for some Canadian homebrew farce rather than the daily death toll of Arab and Jew:

October 25. Five IDF soldiers were killed, and three seriously wounded, in a Hizbullah roadside bomb attack against an IDF convoy inside the eastern sector of the security zone in south Lebanon. And Arab workers, waiting to enter Israel from Gaza at the Erez checkpoint, rioted, heaving rocks. Three buses were partially burned.

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Fifteen Arabs were injured and a day-long commercial strike was declared in Gaza.

October 27. Attacks by Palestinian gunmen with grenades in Jenin, another attack by knife-and axe-wielders in Gaza wounded two Israelis. A Gazan in Khan Yunis, and another in Gaza City, were both shot dead by other Palestinians, apparently for cooperating with the authorities. A Katyusha rocket, fired into Kiryat Shmona, killed fourteen-year-old Vadim Shuchman, whose family had immigrated from Russia two years earlier. A neighbor, Leah Yaffin, also a new immigrant from Russia, told a *Jerusalem Post* reporter, "I never thought that in a Jewish State we would need to hide like mice. We have a strong army and we should bombard the terrorists with at least 100 shells for every one of their Katyusha rockets."

All at once, I was fed up with tensions that have long been Israel's daily bread. I resented the need to stiffen every time an Arab, wearing a *keffiyah* came striding toward me. I was weary of the West Bank's loopy, God-crazed settlers toting M-16 assault rifles on the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Ironically, the American-bred immigrants among them, playing latterday gunslingers, actually owed more to their TV heritage of "Maverick" and "Rawhide" than they did to Hillel or Rabbi Akiba. I also didn't want to encounter any more appealing Israeli boys and girls in uniform, both at risk, out for a stroll, lugging submachine guns rather than briefcases stuffed with textbooks.

I was raised to proffer apologies because my ostensibly boring country was so short of history, but after five footloose weeks in a land choking on the clinging vines of its own incomparably rich past, a victim of contrary mythologies, I considered the watery soup of my Canadian provenance a blessing. After traveling through the Rockies, Rupert Brooke had complained that he missed "the voices of the dead." Me, I was grateful at last for their absence. ❐

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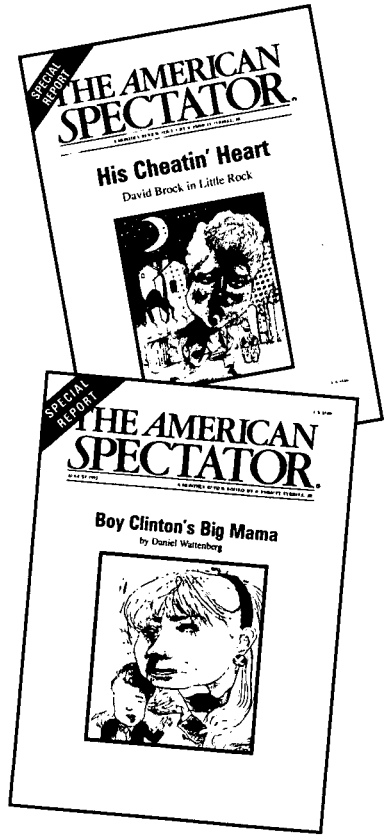

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Tokyo Curry

by Ajay Singh

First come the onions—peeled, sliced, and fried all morning long. Mounds of onions: twelve kilos filling three large aluminum stock-pots. I sprinkle in some spices—a minimum—and stir. Then I take three shrimps, slice them up the middle, lay them on a plate, and ladle the onion mixture on top. I announce to a waiter: *"Ebi no curry."* Shrimp curry. *Voilà:* with a half day's training, I am a chef at an Indian restaurant.

If you've ever wondered about the authenticity of the food at your local Indian restaurant, I am here to tell you my tale. I am from India. Never had I cooked in my life except on camping trips. Suddenly I was churning out shrimp curry, chicken and mutton curry, eggplant curry, fish curry, pumpkin curry, not to mention various side dishes. It's people like me who cook the tandooris and nans that people like you eat in San Francisco, New York, or London. This is the sorry truth: I am Indian food outside of the subcontinent—well, me and onions. Lots of onions.

According to the old saying, God sends meat and the devil sends the cooks. There was no need for the devil at my restaurant. Its name was Indoya and it was located in one of the busiest commercial districts of the world's most bustling city, Tokyo. Indoya's staff was pulled to its kitchen by the mighty Japanese yen. All of us were illegal.

I was an oddball: a journalist interested in the lives of such workers. But here I stood, doing a job my family in India would consider ignominious, getting lots and lots of material, stirring lots of onions—and making lots of money. But maybe I wasn't such an oddball. Tahir, a Pakistani, came to the restaurant from a nickel factory. Musa, a Burmese, was a former tanner. None of us had worked in a kitchen before. All were making more money than we ever dreamed possible.

Ajay Singh is a writer living in New Delhi.

During the sixties and seventies, poor Asians in search of jobs migrated to the U.S. and England. In the eighties, they flocked to Europe and Australia. Now it's Japan's turn. Most foreigners can't hope to settle there, but they can work a few years and earn a nest egg. These workers—from Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Philippines, and African countries—work in factories, ports, and construction sites. Foreign men tend the bars of Japan's cities and towns; foreign women work as prostitutes for the Yakuza, the Japanese mafia.

And they have flooded Japan with new ethnic restaurants. In the 1970s, Tokyo had only a handful of non-Japanese or non-Western restaurants. Now there are hundreds serving virtually every cuisine of Asia. Technically, foreign restaurant workers have violated Japanese immigration law and can be arrested at any time. In fact, Japan tolerates these "illegals" to bridge a gap in its labor market. Even in recession there are too many jobs and not enough employees: currently Japan has more than 300,000 illegal workers.

I took a job at Indoya to find out if these workers were really the unhappy, exploited individuals of popular myth. It was an upstairs restaurant on a small lane in Tokyo's Shinjuku section. A stereo blared Indian music into the street. Steep steps led to a large, open room with seven tables seating thirty-five people. At the far end was a counter and behind it, in public view, the kitchen. Curries cost six to ten dollars; rice or nan (an Indian bread), cost two dollars. A second helping of rice came free. This made Indoya's food among the cheapest in Tokyo, which assured a steady clientele of artists, musicians, and office workers on a budget.

Indian cuisine is centuries old but it didn't take me long to learn it. Its most exquisite recipes are unrecorded, culinary secrets passed down through the generations by word of mouth. I also got my training by word of mouth. Javed was a former factory worker in a Japanese car plant. He hired me one rainy Sunday morning, when I climbed the steps and begged for a job. At first he refused. He said the work would be too tough for me, which I thought ludicrous. But I soon found Javed had been telling the truth. The work was hard and, at 13 hours a day, long. Not many people lasted. After two months, when my own visa was about to expire, I had become an Indoya veteran: at least four employees had joined and quit in the meantime.

I was washing dishes full-time when one of the chefs quit. Javed asked if I'd take his job. I said I couldn't: I didn't know how to cook. He laughed and slapped me on the shoulder. "You need two things to be successful in Japan," he said, "humility and guts." A few minutes later I found myself in the Indoya kitchen, wearing the special chef's apron.

I was assigned onion duty every morning. The first task was to peel them, all 12 kilos, and push them through a cabbage slicer. We sliced so many onions every morning that the storeroom became supersaturated with onion fumes.

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When a worker accidentally left the storeroom door open, the fumes would seep into the restaurant and the patrons would start fishing into their pockets or purses for handkerchiefs.

Then the onions had to be stirred in a stock-pot over a high flame for 90 minutes without burning. This wasn't as easy as it sounds. The implement used was a paddle large enough to propel a canoe. I took the paddle in both hands and attacked the onions, squashing and smashing them until they had lost some of their fight. Then I added oil, canned tomatoes, canned ginger, canned garlic cloves, and some common spices. Then came more grunting and squashing and pulping until the onions were reduced to a mushy, dirty-brown mixture.

After conquering the onions I was promoted. Now it was time to go on to the main job: making curries. I thought things were going too fast. My older co-workers disagreed. "These people will eat anything," said Deepak, a Gurkha from Nepal. "What do they know about Indian food?"

The top-of-the-line dishes were the chicken and mutton curries. I made them by stewing raw chicken and mutton with Indoya's famous onion mixture for about 40 minutes. The minced meat curry was a special preparation: I took frozen packets of stinking minced lamb from Australia, boiled it to reduce the smell, and combined the meat with the onion mixture. *Vegetable curry*: I diced eggplant, fried it in oil, and poured onion mixture on top. *Pumpkin curry*: I chopped two pumpkins, boiled them to a mash, and added onion mixture on top. *Bean curry*: I opened a can of mixed beans, ladled onion mixture on top, and heated it. Authenticity was not our strong point: In lieu of Indian breads we used packaged pita bread shipped in from New Jersey.

Because the onion mixture was added to every dish, the curries tasted and looked identical. The waiters could rarely distinguish one curry from another. When a customer asked which curry was being served, the waiter would be forced to scoop up the onion blanket and peer underneath.

Some customers thought they knew Indian cuisine. They would ask for a spicy dish, or even the spiciest. When the waiter relayed the request to the chef, he'd normally laugh. "Spicy? Is he absolutely sure?" he'd ask. "Okay, we'll give it to him!" And then he would sprinkle two or three tablespoons of red chili powder into the dish, often without reheating it. The chefs and waiters watched as the customer dipped into his meal. If he became uncomfortable—wiping his forehead or gulping glasses of water—they would laugh loudly.

Yet most people liked Indoya. They ate heartily and rarely complained. The number of patrons increased every month. Office workers introduced their colleagues to the place; housewives came with their neighbors; college students brought their girlfriends.

One evening, a bespectacled middle-aged Japanese came to the restaurant. He sat at a table near the kitchen and scanned the menu with an air of knowledge. I happened to be waiting that night. "Which is your best dish?" he asked.

"All the dishes are good."

He tipped his head back and laughed. He ran his finger up the menu. "What do you recommend?"

I suggested mutton curry.

When the curry arrived, he broke a piece of bread, dipped it into the gravy and put it in his mouth. Then he took a piece of meat and chewed it slowly. He leaned back in the chair and swore in disgust. He called me over.

"Is this your best curry?" he asked mockingly.

"I'm sorry," I said.

He threw some bills on the table and left the restaurant, shaking his head.

Javed saw the scene. "He's mad," he said. In fact he was the sanest man to enter the restaurant while I worked there. He knew our food for what it was. But he was the only one I met in two months who did.

Speed was the *sine qua non* at Indoya. Waiters raced from table to table, balancing half a dozen dishes in both hands; the chef stirred the onions with the vigor of a man possessed; the dishwasher washed plate after plate as if he were dealing a pack of cards. "Work without speed is no good," Javed liked to say. "A donkey works hard but he's still called a donkey." (Javed, who came from Larkana, Pakistan, favored rural bromides.)

Speed was especially important in dish washing because the restaurant had a limited supply of crockery. All the cleaning was done by hand. Javed pulled a plate from the rack. "See this?" He pointed to the red, blue, and green willow pattern on the plate. "This is what saves us a lot of time and effort. Why do you think we don't use white plates?" Javed taught me a cardinal principle. "At home, we scrub dishes well," he explained one morning. "In restaurants, we do not."

The chefs never washed their hands, taking the faster expedient of licking them clean. The dishwasher, who also was in charge of salads, often dispatched salads with as much soap-suds as salad dressing on them. The employ-

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ees were never allowed to sit—except for 15 minutes at the lunch break—which left a throbbing in the back that one waiter described as an arrow in his muscles. Sometimes to relieve the pain I would squat on the floor pretending to pick something up. This offered only a temporary respite, but it was as satisfying as a sip of cool water on a hot day.

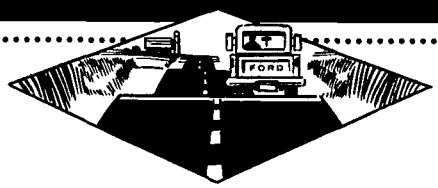
Japan is famous for hard work, of course. Recently, a Japanese tobacco corporation agreed to pay $370,000 to compensate the family of an employee who had literally been worked to death. The employee had worked 400 hours a month. At Indoya, we logged 390—13 hours a day, seven days a week. Our entire lives—minus commuting and sleeping—were spent at work. We lived, to quote Orwell in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, "in a rhythm between work and sleep, without time to think, hardly conscious of the exterior world."

There are problems for the illegal workers, including loneliness, alienation from the Japanese, and the remote possibility of being caught and deported. Unregistered foreigners cannot own a car. Medical care is virtually unaffordable. But our work wasn't the sheer exploitation Orwell described in his chronicle of the underclass in pre-war France and England. We had a dignity Orwell's *plongeurs* did not. We lived comfortably and ate and dressed well. A lot of us had Japanese girlfriends. We were allowed a day off every week and many chose to use that day to work more. Some workers refused to take a holiday—or, when they did, they went and worked another job elsewhere in Tokyo.

The big distinction between us and Orwell's slaves of the 1920s and '30s was money. At seven dollars an hour, we made at least $90 per day, and, with overtime, up to $2,000 a month. The pay was less than average for blue-collar workers in Japan. But compared to what people make in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, or the Philippines, it was a fortune. In my country, an office worker makes $100 or less per month. A top journalist makes about $2,000, including perks.

And when I worked at Indoya, I am proud to say, I made three times the salary of the president of India. ❐

THE NATION'S PULSE



Closing the BCCI Curtain

by James Ring Adams

Just how far does the BCCI conspiracy go? That's the question facing the investigators who broke open the global criminal enterprise that was the Bank of Credit and Commerce International now that the U.S. Justice Department has taken a dive on the case. Why is it, they're asking, that the Clinton administration, no more than the Bush administration before it, is showing such little curiosity about the worldwide connections of the BCCI, which include drug lords, terrorists, arms dealers, and spies? And why is it shutting down questions about the bank's political penetration of the United States?

These questions erupted in early July when the Justice Department sponsored a plea bargain giving the number two man at BCCI a nine-year sentence, to be reduced by the two years and eight months he has already served under house arrest in Abu Dhabi. The deal provoked an extraordinary public protest from Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, who picked up the case in the first place when the Bush administration tried to sweep it under the rug.

This is no ordinary inter-agency spat. The BCCI, as they say in the Middle East, is the mother of all financial scandals, as well as the most exotic. Only the tiniest flavor of its global reach comes through the stock description—an Arab-owned bank run by Pakistani visionaries, chartered in Luxembourg, headquartered in London and active in seventy countries. When the bulk of the bank collapsed over the Fourth of July weekend in 1991, shut down by an international consortium of bank regulators, it wiped out tens of thousands of small, immigrant-owned businesses in London, caused bank runs and riots in Hong Kong, and wiped out the national reserves of a dozen Third World countries. Some $12 billion of its $20 billion in assets had disappeared.

Although American regulators refused to let the BCCI directly into the U.S. market, its illegally controlled proxies have put a heavy hit on American taxpayers. The secretly owned Independence Bank in California failed at a cost of $100 million, and BCCI Investment kept afloat the lurid Centrust Savings Bank of Miami, allowing it to double its losses before its $2 billion collapse.

The disaster not only hurt honest depositors, it opened a once-in-a-lifetime window on the world-wide flow of dirty money. Desperate to cover its losses, the BCCI had made itself the central bank for all sorts of clandestine and illegal business. It handled accounts for Medellin drug lords, for Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, for Palestine terrorist and arms dealer Abu Nidal, and for the Central Intelligence Agency. To protect these interests, the bank and its mystical founder Agha Hasan Abedi aggressively bought influence in political elites around the world, including those of Washington, D.C., Georgia, and Arkansas.

So it seemed like a major breakthrough when Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi, the first shareholder and current owner of the shards of the BCCI, delivered former BCCI chief Swaleh Naqvi, Abedi's right-hand man,

James Ring Adams is the author of The Big Fix: Inside the S&L Scandal *(Wiley) and co-author (with Douglas Frantz) of* A Full Service Bank: How BCCI Stole Billions Around the World *(Pocket Books).*

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to federal custody in May. But Naqvi quickly got the notion that his federal captors weren't really interested in a full debriefing. As we reported in the last issue ("Hillary, Refco and the BCCI"), the Manhattan DA's office was already grumbling privately about his non-answers. In the angry exchange of letters on the plea bargain, Morgenthau put it on the record. "Naqvi has yet to provide significant, useful cooperation," he wrote to D.C. Federal Judge Joyce Green.

The issue at the very least involves interrogation tactics. As anyone can guess who has read John le Carré or seen Helen Mirren play Lt. Jane Tennison on PBS, a debriefing is a contest of patience, will, and intellect. In this case, Naqvi won hands down. "You had to scare him with a long sentence," said one frustrated investigator. But Justice bargained away the threat of twenty years for racketeering. And it rushed to wrap up the case, thinking it could master a two-decade old criminal conspiracy in two months. Gerald M. Stern, head of the division in charge of the case, told me his investigators didn't even have to use all of the debriefing days available to them. To other BCCI hands, this boast shows that the Justice team was naive and poorly prepared or worse.

As the *Forward*, the Jewish weekly, first reported, Clinton's appointments to Justice are riddled with conflicts of interest over the BCCI case. Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick, Webb Hubbell's successor, represented Clark Clifford and Robert Altman when they tried to get their former employer First American Bank (a BCCI property) to pay their legal fees. She says she has recused herself "from the entire BCCI matter." This leaves it in the hands of Gerald Stern, the special counsel for financial institution fraud, a post created by Congress some four years ago to deal with the savings and loan disaster.

A *Wall Street Journal* editorial pronounced Stern the one person at Justice free of BCCI influence, but that statement may have been too hasty. Stern has a distinguished career in public service cases—the voting rights division under Robert Kennedy, a series of coal mine disaster suits—but he is also a retired director and counsel of Armand Hammer's Occidental Petroleum. Hammer was a shareholder in the predecessor bank to First American and tried

(continued on page 73)

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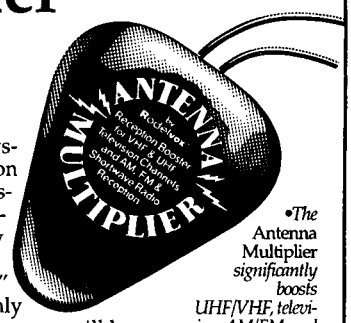

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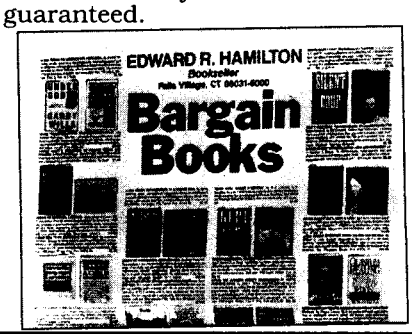

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Medea and the O.J. Media

by John Corry

Say now that the O.J. Simpson case is gripping, and that there has never been anything quite like it before: a double murder and its aftermath played out in real time on television. When Simpson finally gave himself up at his house in California, all the network anchors went on air in New York, not adding much with their commentary, but exalting the event by their presence. There was a hint of what was to come right there. Even Peter Jennings began musing about "the enormous pressure of the media on every inch of the story."

And indeed the pressure was enormous, although it was on the media as much as it was on the story. How could the press, especially television, justify all the attention it was paying to O.J. Simpson? A redemptive reason had to be found, and almost immediately one was. Simpson was picked up on a Friday, and two days later Cokie Roberts could explain on "This Week With David Brinkley" that the story was focusing our attention on spouse abuse. A consensus began to form. On the "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" the next night, the essayist Anne Taylor Fleming said there might even be an "analogue to the Anita Hill thing." The Simpson case could draw attention to the absence of women in power.

There may have been a point there. After Nicole Simpson's piteous 911 call was disclosed, the network news programs and major publications all ran pieces on domestic violence. The larger questions, though, were about race and the nature of victims, and they troubled the press from the start. Surely Simpson had to be suffering from secret afflictions. The day after he was taken into custody, William C. Rhoden, a sports columnist at the *New York Times*, wrote about the burdens on famous black athletes:

> Money and notoriety based on physical prowess can never fully fill certain voids, heal old scars, change skin tone, straighten hair, change any of those intrinsic qualities. The money is a temporary salve—a pain killer that allows the athlete to get through a day, a life, a career. Eventually the troubled soul must stop to confront the demons that have been in pursuit.

Perhaps Simpson had never been able to fill the voids, much less change his skin tone, or confront the demons. The truth was obscure, but the reference to skin tone was prophetic. *Newsweek* said Simpson had transcended race: "His genial, race-neutral style went down easily with white audiences." Rival *Time*, however, innocently reminded everyone he was black. It darkened the mug shot of Simpson that had been released by the Los Angeles Police Department, and used it on its cover.

This was a mistake. In a sensitive age such as ours, political correctness takes precedence over aesthetics. Frank Rich wrote on the op-ed page of the *Times* that by darkening Simpson's face, *Time* had sent him "back to the ghetto." Benjamin Chavis of the NAACP was more vitriolic. He said *Time* had tried to portray Simpson as "some kind of animal." The head of the nation's largest civil-rights organization was attaching a moral stigma to an ebony, as opposed to café-au-lait, color. This seemed bizarre, although in the ensuing argument, no prominent journalist or news organization joined in to take *Time*'s side. Presumably they were afraid to. Responding to "the storm of controversy," James Gaines, the managing editor, had to explain in a full-page letter "to our readers" in the next issue why *Time* darkened the mug shot. A photo-illustrator, he said, had used computer imaging for artistic effect:

> The harshness of the mug shot—the merciless bright light, the stubble on Simpson's face, the cold specificity of the picture—had been shaped into an icon of tragedy. The expression on his face was not merely blank now; it was bottomless. This cover, with the simple nonjudgmental headline "An American Tragedy," seemed the right choice.

And probably it was the right choice, and surely "An American Tragedy" was meant to be nonjudgmental. Indeed, the idea that the Simpson case was a "tragedy" would go on to suffuse much of the press coverage. A *Times* editorial even declared that it was precisely because the case was a tragedy that it had gripped the national interest. "The fall of the mighty was a central theme of classical Greek tragedy . . . and it became the spine of Elizabethan tragedy," the *Times* said. "O.J. Simpson may or may not be a 'hero' to individual citizens, but as one who was given great gifts and has been brought to a grim pass by either fate or frailty, he fits the pattern that lurks in our ancestral memory."

The *Times*, however, was reaching. The characters of classical tragedy accepted their grim passes. Medea howled out her pain, and took responsibility for murdering her children. Simpson wrote a self-pitying letter, and then fled in a Ford Bronco. If innocent he is badly muddled, and if guilty he is beneath contempt. Either way, he is not a tragic figure. In her

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John Corry is The American Spectator*'s regular Presswatch columnist and author of the new book,* My Times: Adventures in the News Trade *(Grosset/G.P. Putnam's Sons).*

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column in the *Times*, Anna Quindlen chided those who felt sorry for him, and said the real victim was Nicole Brown Simpson. Quindlen was right about that, although in her feminist zeal to turn the murder into a plea for battered wives, she forgot about Robert Goldman, who had been left as dead as Nicole Simpson.

Implicit in Quindlen's column, meanwhile, was the notion that Simpson was guilty. In fact, although prominent columnists, correspondents, and anchors do not admit it—nor should they—it is likely that most agree: Simpson has committed two murders. Nonetheless, as professional participants in the drama—"the live electronic drama," Tom Brokaw called it—they have been able to cloak their feelings. Posturing defense attorneys and other sympathizers to the contrary, Simpson has not had a bad press. The tone of the coverage has been more elegiac than censorious, and "An American Tragedy" suggests that the guilt is shared, diffuse, and not anyone's in particular.

Certainly there have been exceptions, and Simpson is not necessarily pictured as nice. *People* magazine ran a notable cover story—"The O.J. Nobody Knew: All his life he worked hard to be loved. But behind the smile and the charm was a dangerous temper and a desperate need to get what he wanted"—that insisted he was nasty. Then, the day after Judge Kathleen Kennedy-Powell ruled that Simpson must face trial, the enterprising *New York Post* published the findings of two experts who had studied his handwriting. They found, the *Post* said, that he was "cowardly, oversexed, immature, tenacious, unpredictable and surly." But no other publication seemed to pick up the story, and probably that was just as well.

The defense team is claiming, of course, that the press already has convicted Simpson, and that it is impossible for him to get a fair trial. Obviously we will continue to hear this. Robert L. Shapiro, Simpson's lead counsel, once wrote an article entitled "Using the Media for Your Advantage." F. Lee Bailey, another celebrated member of the team, first became famous when he was successful in overturning the conviction of Sam Sheppard, the Cleveland osteopath who had been found guilty of murdering his wife. The case is cited in law schools as the classic example in which pretrial publicity was used to reverse a conviction. Bailey may be seen on CNN now, arguing that he has never seen pretrial publicity this bad, and preparing the ground for an appeal if his client is convicted.

But contrast the press treatment of Simpson with its treatment of Mike Tyson, another gifted athlete who also was born poor and black. He was never seen as ambiguous, interesting, or worthy of much pity. The press was hostile toward him from the start, in part because in a sensitive age, it finds rape less socially acceptable than murder. Murder may be explained—diminished capacity, temporary insanity, disadvantaged circumstances—but rape has no alleviating factors. Attempted or alleged, it is always heinous. Moreover, Tyson practiced a brutal profession, and hit other men with his fists. Prominent journalists could not find much to empathize

with there, and although Tyson was convicted on the most slender evidence, few thought of it as a tragedy. He is serving a three-year sentence, and will not be released until next year.

Tyson had a further disadvantage. He was, by almost anyone's reckoning, ill-favored and homely, while Simpson, either in café au lait or *Time*'s ebony, is extremely good-looking. The cameras linger on the one in a way that would have been unthinkable with the other. There is no contest between Simpson's sculpted cheekbones and Tyson's beetling brows. The media are susceptible to conventional beauty, and do what they can to promote it. They may pretend it does not influence their coverage, but given the chance they extol it. When Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis died at age 64, she was eulogized for having lived the last years of her life with dignity, grace and discretion, and successfully raising two children. But *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report* all ran cover photos of Mrs. Onassis at approximately age 30, while *People* filled a "commemorative issue" with similar glamorous pictures. An older, more interesting woman gave way to an ephemeral Jackie.

Obviously, Simpson has some advantages. Bailey and his colleagues notwithstanding, the press has been fair, or as fair as it probably can be, to their client. Polls by both *Newsweek* and CNN found that most black Americans believe Simpson cannot get a fair trial; but that depressing finding reflects cultural paranoia more than anything real, and it is to be devoutly hoped that Chavis, as well as the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Joseph Lowery, the head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, who also have joined in the argument, will in the future stay silent. *Newsweek* was right when it called Simpson "race neutral." Even the cheesiest publications have been hesitant to exploit the fact that he had a mixed marriage. Colin Powell aside, it is hard to think of another male black celebrity who has so transcended race other than, perhaps, Bryant Gumbel.

Certainly the trial will be a circus, but there is no reason to think that will be to Simpson's disadvantage. More likely it will work in his favor. Alan Dershowitz, who zipped into Los Angeles in his Lear jet, and then was uncharacteristically quiet, will emerge from hiding, and anchors and correspondents will scrupulously report all the defense arguments, while priding themselves on their balance and fairness. The preliminary hearing could be seen on ten channels in New York, while the national news programs led with it more often than not, and only "MacNeil/Lehrer" had the audacity to sometimes ignore it. Meanwhile, the old rationale of spouse abuse was dropped; the new idea was that we could see the criminal-justice system at work. Former Attorney General Richard Thornburg even told Larry King that the whole world was watching. It probably was, and you wonder what it made of it. ❐

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Foxes

by Benjamin J. Stein

Monday

A planned lunch at a very good Italian place in Malibu called Tradinoi. It's a stunningly gorgeous sunny clear day here and I'm meeting my friend Hilda to cheer her up. She's a woman of about forty who is about to become a single mother, exclusively by choice and by plan. She's an attractive woman with jet black hair and pale blue eyes and a perpetual smile. She was once a mime, and actually used to be a San Francisco street mime, perhaps the most offensive job on earth. But she pulled herself together and now teaches mathematics to gifted children in the public schools of Santa Monica. Of course, as she often points out, what we now call "gifted" in 1962 would have been called B-average.

Anyway, I had the great pleasure of meeting Hilda in Journey into Self-Obsession a few years ago when I used to go regularly to that bizarre group. I talked to her after a meeting and learned that her mother, a German Jew, had been in a concentration camp for five years and survived. I later met the mother for dinner when she was out here from Brooklyn, where she operates a card shop. The Mom was self-effacing and stolid, and had an amazing sang-froid about the entire matter.

The mother's family was seized by the Gestapo in the small town in Germany where they had been cattle merchants for hundreds of years. When the Gestapo dirt entered the family house, they simply shot an infant son, Hilda's uncle, so to speak, because he would be too much trouble to transport and murder somewhere else. The mother's parents were gassed. The mother and her sister survived as slave laborers in a munitions factory.

Hilda's mom is incredibly strong and to this day almost never gets sick. When the war was over, she took herself back to her town and to her house. An erstwhile Nazi was living there. Even though she was just 20, she ordered the Nazis out of her house, collected whatever little bits of clothing she could find, and came to America.

As organized and disciplined as Mom is, that's how unfocused and confused daughter Hilda is. She's also uniquely good-hearted, and one of the few women I know in L.A. whom I've come to admire.

About a year ago, Hilda decided that she was unlikely to get married any time soon. This is not an unusual fate in Los Angeles, where there is rarely enough personality left for interest in anyone but oneself. She also decided that she wanted to have a baby. Specifically, she wanted a baby so that she could help to carry on her family line despite Hitler's efforts to eradicate it. And she very specifically wanted a baby to replace, so to say, or to remember, the infant uncle the Gestapo killed when they entered her mother's house *not so very long ago.*

Hilda also loves children, and considers it a gift from God just to be around them. She solicited and got a sperm donation from a friend in a faraway city, and soon became pregnant. At that point, she began to wonder if she should in fact have the baby. After all, as she often told me (whom she fatefully considered a great expert on raising children), it was a big responsibility, a big expense, and a huge expenditure of time. However, and this is what makes me like her so much, she ruled out abortion from the first moment. "I love children," she said. "I'm not going to murder my own child after I wanted one for so long. I'll just get by one day at a time, with love."

I was on my way to meet this modern hero of the pro-life movement when I heard a strange story on the car radio just as I was passing Zuma Beach, jammed with sunbathers.

"We interrupt the CBS news for a KCBS special report," said the announcer. "One of the bodies which we reported found in the Brentwood section of West Los Angeles has been identified as the former wife of football great O.J. Simpson . . ."

Now, this is news indeed.

Benjamin J. Stein is a writer, actor, economist, and lawyer living in Malibu, California.

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Crime has gotten so bad that even in Brentwood, one of the absolutely most expensive neighborhoods on earth, even when the victim is a beautiful, well-to-do woman like the former Ms. Simpson, violence and death are omnipresent. Our moron mayor, Richard Riordan, lives in Brentwood himself. I hope this moves his honor to do something real about crime, instead of trying to nickel and dime the police force into absolute and total demoralization.

When I told Hilda the news, she was in shock. "I just saw O.J. with his new girlfriend at a party in La Quinta," she said. "He seemed so on top of things. They did quarrel about something, but he was very jovial when he was around the rest of the group."

She then produced from her pocketbook a photo of herself and the other members of the party, including a beaming O.J. and his girlfriend, Paula Barbieri.

The restaurant turned out to be closed in any event, so we went to my favorite Chinese place and talked about how dangerous L.A. is. Then I went home to file.

Down in my basement, madly killing spiders, sweeping away spider webs and insanely trying to find three months of missing checks, I could hardly stop thinking about Nicole Simpson. I used to see her and O.J. at Mister Chow, a formerly elegant restaurant in Beverly Hills long ago. They sat at the table next to us so often that we began to greet them and they greeted us. I always thought they were a gilded couple, with him so handsome and so strong, and her so blond and pretty. But I do remember she always looked nervous.

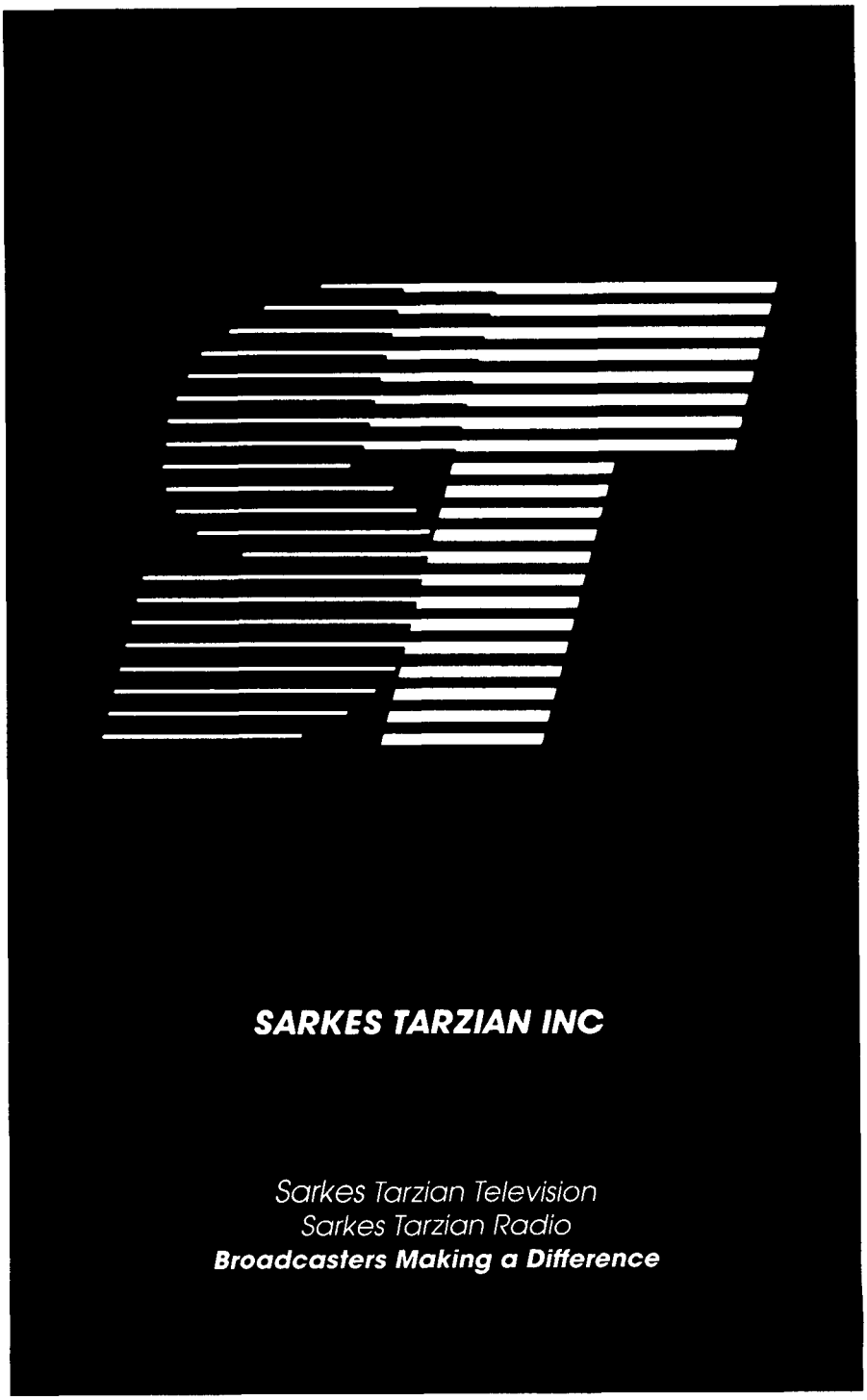
Friday

This town has gone murder crazy. I mean totally nuts. There is story after story about how O.J. had been beating his wife for years, how the police have been called about ten times and never did anything, about bloody ski masks and blood in the driveway of what they always call O.J.'s "mansion." I guess he really did it. Still, I would not trust the LAPD a lot. They are nice folks and do a hard job, but they are not always great at investigating crimes. They have a nasty habit of accusing people of crimes that never happened, or maybe I'm thinking of the Manhattan Beach police.

Why did O.J. do it? Think what his life was like: money pouring in from commercials and from commenting on sports. Little kids worshipping him. Beautiful women *desiring* him. Plus, there has to have been a certain spectacular self-confidence derived from being able to control one's body as precisely and powerfully as a Heisman Trophy winner. Clumsy people like yours truly can hardly even imagine what that must feel like. What could motivate a man with so much good in his life enough to commit murder?

Well, these are all problems someone else is going to get $300 per hour to think about, so on with the show.

On my way this afternoon to do a commercial—which requires me to say "Duh-uhh" in that maddening way today's young people have of saying it, a way that's supposed to imply that everyone else is stupid and the kids are effortlessly smart—I stopped at a liquor store



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to buy some throat lozenges. Just as I pulled in, the radio announcer said a warrant had been issued for O.J.'s arrest on two counts of murder with special circumstances—lying in wait and two victims. That means the gas chamber, maybe.

Wow. What a rush. It's like revolution. It's like watching the aristos meeting the guillotine. There's something about it that suspends normal reality. This is becoming a strange day.

I did my commercial, a job akin to paying a six year old to go to Disneyland. If you knew how easy it is to do them and how much they pay—even at my very modest level—you would leave everything in your life behind to come to Hollywood to get onto the gravy train.

Afterward, as I headed over to the Sunset Car Wash, I heard the police spokesman say that O.J. was on the run and that the LAPD did not know where he was. Incredible.

Look what's comin' up the street,
Gotta revolution.
Ain't it amazin' all the people I meet,
Gotta revolution. . .

That Jefferson Airplane song keeps going through my little brain at the car wash. The attendants, the beautiful Vietnamese girl who takes the cash, the customers, the shoeshine man—we're all jazzed.

I strolled up Laurel while they waxed my car. I know this guy, Bob Shapiro, who represents O.J. He is one clever guy. But I don't trust him. I know he's smart from the time a good friend accidentally killed someone in a car accident not long ago. It was pretty raw, but Shapiro got him off with no jail time at all. I don't trust him because he wears those very sharp double-breasted con man's suits. The ones that scream: *Stay away—this man is out to take something from you.*

There was a "For Rent" sign in front of a beautiful 1950s-style apartment house. I walked in to look at the apartment. It was a tiny one-bedroom facing a clean, crystalline pool. Seven hundred dollars. Dirt cheap.

I have the recurring fantasy that I will someday just run away and move into a tiny apartment, leave behind my mortgages and stacks of bills, and live in that little room and only do commercials and play with Little Perfect. Of course, it's only a fantasy, but very revealing of just how much I *loathe* responsibility.

Back at my condo at the mighty Shoreham Towers, I set to work trying to learn to use the Grammatik feature of my WordPerfect 6.0a program. It's astonishing. If you put in "girls," the computer program tells you that's sexist and you should instead try "young women." If you put in "mailman," it tells you to try "mailperson." If you put in "colored person," it tells you "African-American." If you put in "Jew," it says "offensive."

As I was looking to see what else it didn't like, I heard on my radio that a friend of O.J., someone weirdly named Bobby Kardashian, was reading what sure sounds like a suicide note. I went to my TV, and there it was. A beautifully framed, eloquently written letter from O.J. saying how much he loved his kids and his friends, and that people should recall the real O.J. and not this myth the media has made up.

Hmmm. I should put Mr. S.'s speech through Grammatik and see what comes out. I have the ultrastrong feeling he did not write that little beauty. It sounds a lot more like the work of a sharp lawyer preparing the ground for an insanity plea. Nixon once told me he could tell a Communist just by the phrases and words he used. By the same token, I, a lawyer, can usually spot another lawyer. And as someone who's done a ton of ghostwriting, I can also always spot a ghostwritten document. I would stake a lot that this is one. But, then, I have been known to be wrong.

No sooner did I come back from a swim at the Shoreham Towers than there was another news flash on the radio, the best one yet: the LAPD has tracked down The Juice. He's riding the freeways in a white Bronco and he's calling Mom on the cell-phone. Everybody in town is watching him on TV. They've cut off the network news to follow it. Even my braino parents in Washington are watching it. Yes, the world is upside down. O.J., multi-millionaire, sports star, god of physical ability, spokesman for Hertz, is in the back seat holding a gun to his head while an old pal drives around—and half of L.A. is by the side of the freeway watching.

I rushed out of my condo/office to watch this historic moment with Alex and Tommy. In the lobby, the doormen and desk clerk were clustered around the TV, breathless, fixated. The roads were deserted. In fact, in my eighteen years in L.A., I can't recall such empty streets. It's like the day after doomsday. On the radio, announcers are talking to us, the poor listeners, and also to O.J., begging him not to run anymore, begging him, in the name of his great reputation in sport, to turn himself in.

What about Nicole and Ron Goldman? Who's talking to them? How come O.J., the putative murderer, is getting all the pleading and soothing? Tens of thousands of people were lined up on the freeway cheering and whistling at O.J. "Go, O.J., Go," said one cruelly ironic sign.

Now, some of these foolish people might actually think that by running so far for so long O.J. could undo what

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he'd done. Some might just be so stupid that they go for the spectacle no matter how grotesque. But some, I think, are mocking this once great man and laughing at his downfall. They're cheering the run of the fox that must inevitably be torn to pieces by the hounds. That's just plain sadistic and crazy.

Now O.J. is in his driveway. After a lot of words from the helicopter newscasters, he is surrendering—apparently clutching a photo of the woman he is said to have just killed and the children he is said to have just orphaned.

Hmmm. My little brain is working overtime on this one. Suppose you're O.J.'s lawyer. Just suppose. Suppose it's pretty obvious to you that he did the ghastly deed. But suppose you know the realities of the court system. You know that O.J. is a hero. You know that he is madly loved by people throughout America and especially in L.A. You also know that in L.A., *vide* the Menendez Brothers, the insanity defense is an extremely flexible garment.

What better notion than to have O.J. "write" a fake suicide note, go on a quixotic and bizarre car run, crouch in the back seat with a pistol, then get out of the car clutching a picture frame like some weird football version of Blanche DuBois?

This is the way the world ends. Not with a bang but with a lawyer.

Saturday

A reunion in Washington, D.C. of some of the few members of the Stein family. My parents, my sister and brother-in-law, the world's hardest-working human, my niece and nephew, my aunt, a first cousin and her two kids, and some more distant cousins are all in a suite at the River Inn looking at photos of near and far relatives. My cousin Alayne has made a family tree. Plus clippings from the death of FDR. The pictures are bewildering and I am hard put to make much sense of them. The main things I like are my grandfather's military records. He came from Russia and went as a teenager into the U.S. Army. He served all over the west and then in the American suppression of independence movements in the Philippines.

My father has his sharpshooter's medal, his certificates of good conduct, his promotion records from private to corporal and then to sergeant, then his mustering-out papers and his recommendation for future employment.

Then there's a series of photos of him and my father and aunt. He looks jaunty in his boater. He also had papers talking about his work as a machinist in an arsenal in upstate New York during World War II—pay, $1.00 per hour—when he was a fairly old man.

There's also talk about how my uncle, or great-uncle, made a fortune on the stock market and then committed suicide after the Crash of 1929, and even talk of a mysterious relative who committed an armed robbery, then went to jail (in those days criminals went to jail for armed robbery), and then came out and became a "chorus boy" in Broadway musicals.

This evening, we had a dinner at the Cosmos Club. Tommy ran around like a maniac and my father asked me to try to quiet him. I took him out to the garden on Florida Avenue and his eyes widened. →

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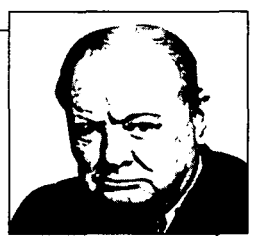

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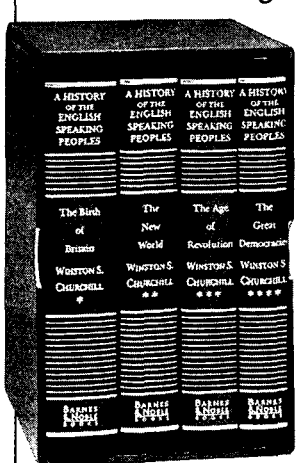
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"Look, Daddy," he said. "Fireflies."

And sure enough, by the grace of God, there were fireflies floating luminously around the small fountain and pond. Tommy ran around after them to look at them more closely. We don't have fireflies in Sunny (but cold at night) Cal, and Tommy was in ecstasy. He'd never seen them before.

It struck me that Tommy is a much happier child than I was. I was a brooding, frightened child. Tommy is largely fearless, easy to laugh, and very, very easy to make friends. I think it's because he has innate confidence, a very confident mother, and much, much more lavish—though less secure—material circumstances than I had.

Tommy chased fireflies and my Aunt Pearl came out to smoke a cigarette. "Your grandfather was the most patriotic man I ever knew," she said. "He wanted to enlist in World War II when he was 55 years old. I think he would have done anything this country wanted him to do. He just loved being an American."

Inside, my father gave a speech about our family. He ended by saying that we all mostly owed a debt to the ancestors who thought to come to America. Without that, we would all be dead or never born. Beyond that, he said, quoting from a prayer he learned when chapel was mandatory at Williams College, we owed it all to God, from whom all blessings flow.

Amen.

Friday

Little Mr. Perfect and I are on our way up to Idaho for a long Fourth of July weekend. We're in the TWA/Alaska lounge watching O.J.'s preliminary hearing on the TV. It's almost unbelievable. A parade of witnesses is appearing before a judge, in a capital case, probably the biggest such spectacle since the Lindbergh kidnapping, maybe bigger. Certainly, O.J. is a far more famous defendant than the lunatic in the Lindbergh case. There's talk about a bloodstained Akita, about howls in the night, about rivers of blood pouring down a walkway in Brentwood—and the witnesses are dressed as if they're at a picnic.

One woman is wearing shorts. A man is wearing an open-necked shirt. Another is wearing a gangster black shirt and what sure looks like a pony tail. What a world. Not one is dressed in a suit and tie or in a respectable dress. One of the men looks to be wearing sandals!

But the whole lounge is gathered by the TV, watching as if they were getting a blood transfusion through the tube. My favorite is the hostess, an aging slattern in a dress so tight she might as well be buck nekkid, and in a loud voice she's calling the whole thing "gross." Madam, don't you know this is history? The revolution against good sense and decency? A revolution and a preliminary hearing are not dinner parties.

On the plane, I noticed what I have so often noticed: that passengers in first class are ruder than passengers in coach. There's a drunk couple across the aisle from me, madly necking and distracting me from my pile of *Wall Street Journal*s. There's a duo behind me endlessly shuffling cards. I hate people who make a spectacle of themselves—unless it's in front of a camera and they're getting paid for it. I hate unnecessary noise even more.

Plus, I'm still a little unstrung from an incident I'm trying to block from my memory: As I was getting my ticket and my boarding pass, I was asked by the Alaska Airlines clerk, a large woman, if I had any bags. I told her I had one and that I planned to bring it on board.

"You can't bring that on board," she said. "It's much too big. It won't fit."

"Yes, it will fit," I said. "I've fit it overhead many times."

"I don't believe you," she said.

"What?" I asked. "You're telling me I'm a liar? You're telling me, a very frequent Alaska flyer, that I'm lying."

"How often you fly has nothing to do with it," she said coolly.

"Well, I'd like to at least take it to the gate and see if they'll let me take it aboard."

"You can't," she said. "I'll have to call security if you try."

"I hope you're kidding," I said.

"No," she said.

I submitted quietly, planning how I would sue her for intentional infliction of emotional distress. But it's on my mind. I know in my heart that this woman will be the exact type who will decide if I am allowed to have heart medication when the Clinton health destruction plan passes.

Sunday

A journey south of Coeur d'Alene to a Nez Perce Indian reservation to buy fireworks. For some reason having to do with Indian rights, the reservation sells much more powerful fireworks than the rest of America is allowed to. Tommy and his two pals, Rachel and Alex, and their father, Peter, and I drove about fifty-five miles along a beautiful river to get here.

People were buying fireworks as fast as they could plunk down their money. When my turn at the counter came, the young Indian waiting on me looked hard at my face, listened to me for a moment, and said, "Bueller, Bueller." Apparently, *Ferris Bueller* is a big fave on the reservation. So are reruns of "The Wonder Years." He had me sign autographs for him and his father, who owns the stand—if a supermarket of fireworks can be called a "stand."

Then he gave me half off the goodies. Then he and his mother took me on a tour of the private zoo they have, with buffalo, cougars, and a panther. Tommy ran around feeding a few miniature horses and waving his arms. He loves animals.

At nightfall, we set off lots of bottle rockets, Dixie screamers, pinwheels, black widows, M-70s (M-80s aren't sold any longer, thanks to federal regulations), ground flowers, and sparklers in Peter's yard. "We have the coolest fireworks in the *world*," Tommy screamed. "We conquered the neighborhood." He jumped up and down with uncontrollable glee in the light of the sparklers.

When I finally got him to bed by telling him an interminable story I made up about Ren and Stimpy in Las Vegas, I left the door facing the lake and the marina open. There was a slight breeze, and I could hear the wind pushing the lanyards of the boats against the masts, sounding like wind chimes on water. On the other side of the Edgewater Inn, I could hear the Burlington Northern freights coming through every fifteen minutes, shaking the hotel. On the next bed, I could hear Tommy's angelic rhythmic snoring. Most nights I feel as if I have failed at every single thing I ever addressed. But not tonight. ❐

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The Bad Brother

by Terry Eastland

On June 24, in a front-page story on how frequently Justice Clarence Thomas agrees with Justice Antonin Scalia, the *Washington Post*'s Joan Biskupic wrote that "their common pattern on opinions is that Scalia writes it up and Thomas signs it." Biskupic spoke too soon. In a major voting rights case decided six days later, it was Thomas who wrote it up—some fifty-nine pages in all—and Scalia who signed it. Thomas's lengthy concurrence in *Holder* v. *Hall* is a courageous treatise on the Supreme Court's misguided voting rights jurisprudence.

Because the opinion envisions a withdrawal of the federal judiciary from voting rights disputes, and because its author is black, the civil rights crowd that so bitterly opposed Thomas's nomination in 1991 took sharp exception. On July 10, executive director Benjamin Chavis opened the NAACP's annual meeting by asking the 4,000 assembled to "pray" for his "brother" because he had ruled against those "trying to get some voting rights for African Americans." Chavis appeared to threaten Thomas with something more than prayer. "In the African American tradition," he said, "our definition of prayer is more than words. We need to bring him to the prayer house." This was too much even for the pacifist-liberal columnist Colman McCarthy, who paddled Chavis for "overweening arrogance." Wrote McCarthy, mockingly, "Since 'the brother' has lost his way, we his moral superiors at the NAACP will pray that the Lord can straighten him out." If Chavis is upset by Thomas's decision, McCarthy wrote, "less talk about praying for the brother and more talk with the brother is in order."

Indeed, Thomas's opinion—and not the turgid and deceptive writings of Lani Guinier—defines the kind of talk that should take place both within and outside the Supreme Court regarding the Voting Rights Act. In *Holder* and in another case decided on June 30, *Johnson* v. *DeGrandy*, the court was asked to interpret Section 2 of the statute, enacted in 1965 to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment's protection of the right to vote against denial or abridgment on account of race or color. "The whole concern of the act," wrote Emory law professor Andrew Kull in his excellent book, *The Colorblind Constitution* (1992), "was to ensure nondiscriminatory access to the ballot." Very soon, however, the statute was refocused on electoral outcomes. Both Section 5, which applies mainly to Southern states and localities, and Section 2, which applies throughout the country, became the legal instruments by which such bodies as the Justice Department, the federal judiciary, and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund facilitated the election of black (and later Hispanic) candidates. The new, if unspoken, goal became proportional representation by race.

The transformation of the Voting Rights Act was on bizarre display in the 1993 case, *Shaw* v. *Reno*. After the 1990 census, North Carolina proposed creating one black-majority congressional district. Acting under its Section 5 authority to object, the Bush Justice Department said the state had enough blacks to warrant a second black-majority district. Inevitably, its shape was racially determined. Slithering for 160 miles along Interstate 40 in order to link up a majority of black voters, the new district alarmed five justices. Whatever Section 5 requires, they agreed, it cannot require that. In her plurality opinion, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote that it was "unsettling how the North Carolina plan resembles the most egregious racial gerrymanders of the past." Concerned that such gerrymandering threatens "to carry us further from the goal of a political system in which race no longer matters," O'Connor suggested that the practice might be unconstitutional.

In the *Holder* case, several black citizens of Bleckley County, Georgia, and the local chapter of the NAACP took on the county's form of government (created in 1912), in which a single commissioner exercises all legislative and executive power. They claimed that the single-commissioner system violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act by "diluting" the voting strength of blacks, who make up roughly 20 percent of the county's eligible voters and have never cast a vote for a black candidate for commissioner, as none have run. The plaintiffs wanted the single-commissioner system replaced by a five-member commission elected from five single-member districts, one of which would be dominated by blacks (a 20 percent share). They lost in the district court but won in the court of appeals for the eleventh circuit.

Reversing that judgment, Justice Anthony Kennedy's plurality opinion accepted as valid the court's understanding of Section 2, as elaborated in 1986 in *Thornbury* v. *Gingles*. The court said that in a vote dilution suit, a court must find a reasonable alternative benchmark against which to measure the challenged voting practice. In the case at hand, said Kennedy, there's no objective way to do that. "There is no principled reason why one size [of government] should be picked over another as the benchmark of comparison." Kennedy held that Section 2 can't be used to challenge the size of a governing authority. →

Terry Eastland, co-author of Counting by Race *(with William J. Bennett), is editor of* Forbes MediaCritic *and a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

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Thomas reached this same conclusion by another route. For him, the touchstone here as in other cases is the statute itself. Section 2 provides that "no voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision in a manner which results in a denial or abridgment of the right of any citizen. . . to vote on account of race or color." Thomas engaged in a lengthy discussion of this language in concluding that the size of a governing body isn't a "standard, practice, or procedure" and therefore can't be challenged under Section 2. What's more, he said, the statute does not allow "for any claims of what we have called vote 'dilution.'"[1] Thomas squarely criticized the court for condoning Section 2 vote-dilution claims in *Gingles*. That case was wrongly decided, he argued, because it relied on dubious legislative history at odds with the wording of Section 2. *Gingles* should be overruled, he said, not only because it got Section 2 wrong, but also because its misinterpretation has proved "unworkable," miring the court in the inherently political task of creating standards for deciding "vote dilution" claims. The principle by which the court has created such standards, Thomas wrote, is precisely the one that the Voting Rights Act condemns: "proportional allocation of political power according to race."

This is a bold opinion, treating as it does controversial matters of statutory construction and *stare decisis* (to stand by decided matters). Not all of Thomas's colleagues were pleased with what he wrote; perhaps predictably, he heard from four of them, in an opinion written by Justice John Paul Stevens, who accused Thomas of a "radical restructuring of the law." But Thomas's opinion is hardly radical: by contending that Section 2 permits only those challenges that "limit citizens' access to the ballot," his interpretation is in line with the statute's original meaning.

[1] Thomas therefore said of the *DeGrandy* case that it should have been dismissed for failure to state a claim; the complaint that the Florida legislature had diluted the voting strength of Cuban-Americans and blacks by creating too few districts dominated by majorities of both ought not be allowed under Section 2.

The court is not likely soon to embrace Thomas's view of *Gingles* or Section 2, nor of the approach to statutory construction that undergirds the latter. It is, in accord with the classic understanding of an opinion of this kind, written for another day and indeed another court. It may also imply a judicial strategy on Thomas's part. After all, why else would he compose such a comprehensive concurrence?

In his book, Andrew Kull writes that if the United States is to recover colorblind law, which it formally embraced in the 1960s, the Supreme Court is the critical unit of government because, "alone among American institutions, [it] retains the power to deflect what will otherwise become an irreversible tendency toward the convenient and destructive practice of allocating social resources by racial and ethnic groups." This practice in the context of voting rights has been the most radical, although until recently the least publicly controversial. The facts in the *Shaw* case, in which O'Connor worried about racial balkanization, were a revelation to many. So have been the facts in *Holder* and *DeGrandy*, and in a group of other cases (now in the lower courts) in which the Justice Department and its racial gerrymandering allies (including most members of the Congressional Black Caucus) have endorsed some strangely drawn districts. Perhaps Thomas has decided that the way back to colorblind law lies through an area (voting rights) in which, issues of statutory and constitutional interpretation to one side, the threat of proportional entitlements by race and ethnicity can be most clearly demonstrated to the public at large.

Whether Thomas is out to recover colorblind law generally, or just in the voting rights area, he will continue to run up against enemies. Indeed, he identified one of them in his opinion. It's the assumption, he wrote, embedded in the Supreme Court's and the Justice Department's approach to vote-dilution cases, that "members of racial and ethnic groups must all think alike on important matters of public policy." This assumption, Thomas writes, "should be repugnant to any nation that strives for the ideal of a colorblind Constitution." An enemy like Benjamin Chavis is another matter entirely. ❐

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Fantasies for All Ages

by James Bowman

Are we becoming a nation of wimps? According to the ultra-caring "Parent and Child" column of the *New York Times*, two-thirds of parents in an informal survey of movie-goers in the New York area thought that ***The Lion King***—which had the third-highest opening weekend at the box office in history (after *Jurassic Park* and *Batman Returns*)—was "too violent, too scary or too loud for their young children." In the *Washington Post*, Richard Leiby wondered if a plot involving treachery, murder, and revenge, even among animals (perhaps *especially* among animals?), could not "psychologically traumatize children by playing on their most primal fear—the loss of a parent."

Look what children were taking in back in the days when their parents were building civilizations and conquering empires: the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm or Charles Perrault in which far more gruesome ends than anything to be found in *The Lion King* were routine. It was easier in those days for children to contemplate being eaten by witches than it is today for them to bear a wicked uncle's making the little lion cub, Simba, feel responsible for his father's death. This is truly "sadism" (as another critic put it) for our times. The violence prudes may insist that "trauma" could result from even knowing that violence and death exist, but to the Disney people the worst horror is guilt—which is ultimately purged by a holy baboon who helps the grown-up Simba put his past behind him.

Nevertheless, I was disappointed not to have hated *The Lion King* more than I did—hatred of the Disney animation people being one of the constants in my life. The film was not so completely false and silly as *Beauty and the Beast* or *Aladdin*, and it actually had some funny moments. As for Disney uplift, well, I guess you could do a lot worse than "the circle of life" that applies even to lions ("What's eating him?" asks one of the Lion King's comic sidekicks. "Nothing," answers another. "He's at the top of the food chain") and the belief that "the Great Kings of the past are looking down from the stars" upon the doings of the animals here below. The big cuddly papa lion, Mufasa—voice by the big cuddly James Earl Jones—promises Simba that "I will always be watching over you," and that's about the least glib and sentimental that you could ever expect Disney to be.

The potential *Hamlet* story in which Uncle Scar (Jeremy Irons) kills off papa and then becomes the target of Simba's revenge is merely perfunctory. It is only possible to believe in Scar's evil as a child does: he's a grumpy old thing who is jealous of his nicer and stronger brother. Scar's vision of "a new era in which lion and hyena come together in a great and glorious future" is unconnected to any political reality that the children—or anybody else—can understand. Nor was the goody-goody ending very satisfactory. Hamlet is not allowed his revenge. "Please have mercy," begs Scar, "I *am* family."

"You don't deserve to live," says Simba.

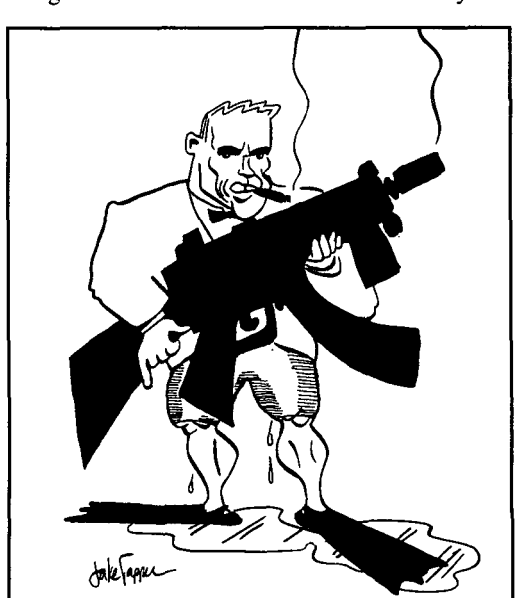
"You're not going to kill me?"

"No, I'm not like you."

Yuck. The unmistakable mark of Disney's Dizzily High Mind there. But I like the filial piety encouraged by Simba's developing sense that his father lives in him. True to his word, he is watching over him and makes him take pride in the pride: "Remember who you are," he says. Good advice even for non-royalty.

But mostly what makes me soften to *The Lion King* is that it is less depressing than the kiddie fantasies that Hollywood cranks out by the multiplex-load in the summertime. It is arguable that pictures like ***Little Big League*** and ***Angels in the Outfield*** ought not really to count as movies at all but should occupy some intermediate category between films and video games. Imagine Jason Robards putting on his résumé that he "acted" in *Little Big League*. No, for him it amounts to a cameo appearance on a cartoon show. A few years ago the kid-fantasy pictures were about ninjas and karate and kickboxing. Now they are about baseball—and, in *Little Big League*, the ultimate fantasy: owning a baseball team, being smarter than and finally taking the place of the manager, and being respected and liked by the players. As Wayne Campbell would say, Tchayah! Right!

In *Angels in the Outfield*, a remake of a film of 1951, ten-year old Roger (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) is told by his bum of a father that the family will get back together when the California Angels, at present in last place, win the pennant. So



James Bowman, The American Spectator*'s movie critic, is the American editor of the* Times Literary Supplement.

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he prays to God ("if there is a God") not that he will bring his father back but that he will enable the Angels to win the pennant. Young Roger is not real bright. The hypothetical God isn't a whole lot brighter either, since He sends His angels to earth for no more exalted a purpose than winning a few ball games—and then tells the favored team through Al, the top angel (Christopher Lloyd), that He can't help them in the championship decider because that is against the rules. They've got to do it on their own!

Hold on a second there, Al. What about all those other games you helped them win? They wouldn't have been in the championship game in the first place if it hadn't been for those, so what's with this pretense that they're doing it on their own? But I forget: this is fantasy. As is, for a slightly older set, ***True Lies*** by James Cameron. This stars Arnold Schwarzenegger, whose sculpted form is the perfect symbol for the adolescent male fantasy. Here is masculinity as a posture, an attitude, an image rather than as substance or true accomplishment. To be sure, the film is a visually spectacular romp that includes a lot of good explosions (as you might expect from something costing $100 million) as well as some good jokes and the sort of body count that should be satisfying to fans of the "action movie" who like to see swarthy-featured foreigners dancing at the end of a stream of American bullets. It is sure to be a hit of Indiana Jones proportions.

This is because in all essentials it *is* an Indiana Jones film. Here, instead of the archaeologist with the charmed life, we have a master spy called Harry Tasker (Schwarzenegger) with an even more charmed life. He drives fast, flies airplanes, rides a horse, handles all manner of weapons and hi-tech gadgetry with expert knowledge but also, without any other weapons than his hands, knocks guys out or kills them with equal dispatch and alacrity; he is admired by men and desired by women, an unrivaled marksman and a linguist, a scuba diver with a tuxedo under his wet suit (surely this is not possible?), a killing machine who also dances a mean tango—in short, a teenaged boy's idea of masculinity. He is what James Bond was to boys of the fifties and sixties, only less cultivated, more domesticated—which makes for an interesting commentary on changing times.

As an exercise in fantasy itself, the film shows real chutzpah in taking as its subject a fantasist (Jamie Lee Curtis as Harry's wife, Helen) whose fantasies suddenly come true. But with so much that is unbelievable surrounding it, this just becomes part of the joke. The same is not true of the Movie of the Month, which is actually two years old and only now finding its way to my neighborhood for a very brief stay. The latest in Eric Rohmer's "Tales of the Four Seasons," it concerns a woman who at first appears to be ruining her life with sterile fantasy but who wins our respect and admiration by the end.

Called ***A Tale of Winter***, the film begins incongruously with scenes from a summer holiday. An attractive couple (Charlotte Véry and Frédéric Van Den Driessche) cavort in the surf and make love and take photographs of each other in a series of Kodak moments as untroubled by the shadow of any unhappiness as the summer is by the expectation of winter. The idyll ends in a train station as the woman, Félicié, gives her address in Paris to the man, Charles, who is himself about to leave for America where he will be traveling around and temporarily unreachable.

Then comes winter. It is five years later at Christmas time. Félicié has not heard from Charles since, though the affair produced a daughter, Elise (Ava Loraschi). By inadvertence Félicié had given Charles the wrong address and does not even know his surname so that she can make an attempt to reach him. (It is worth giving Rohmer that implausibility for what he makes of it.) Whether or not he has made any attempt to reach her she of course does not know, but she is convinced that he has and that for both of them it was the love of their lives. Now she is involved with two men, Maxence (Michel Voletti), a hairdresser, and Loïc (Hervé Furic), a librarian. She has frankly informed both that they can never be more than second best: Charles, she says, "remains in my heart, so I can't give it to anyone else."

Both men are remarkably tolerant about the situation (and about each other!), but her mother (Christiane Desbois) is naturally fed up with this daughter who is still pining away for a long ago summer fling. We begin to feel the same way when she decides to move to Nevers with Maxence, then changes her mind, briefly giving hopes to Loïc before dashing them too. All the way through the film we are tempted to think Félicié a fool, but we are never quite allowed to think it. Her discovery after ditching Maxence that "I can only live with a man I'm madly in love with" makes her look almost silly, and one night at Loïc's she decides to adopt as her own the unmistakable mark of the flake, a belief in reincarnation. But she argues intelligently and, though she is a humble hairdresser herself and not at all bookish like Loïc, often says things that he says remind him of Pascal or Plato. She shrewdly observes that for him "only what's written is true."

Her own justification for her loyalty to Charles includes the wise observation that many women would rather live with another man than those that are available, but for them it is a fantasy, a vision. For her the vision was a reality, she says, albeit briefly. "A guy fired me up once—that's enough." There is a kind of nobility in such faithfulness, so long as it does not degenerate into self-deception, a way of avoiding commitment by clinging to fantasy. Rohmer leaves prettily ambiguous the question of Félicié's mix of nobility and self-deception, but on the whole we are encouraged to believe in the genuineness both of her attachment to Charles and of her belief that she will never see him again.

Thus in the end, when her quixotic constancy to the love she can never stop believing in is rewarded, we realize that Félicié is an unexpected heroine. Our cynicism was probably wrong even if her faith (the issue is not determined) was not certainly right. It is remarkably bold of Rohmer to have allowed himself so blatantly a romantic ending—one that could hardly get by, even in the most maudlin commercial stuff, anywhere else. We look back retrospectively on it to validate a whole range of Félicié's romantic opinions from reincarnation to the grave injunction to Loïc that he needs to get away from her because, so long as she is around, he will not meet the love of *his* life. "She exists!" says Félicié. What would otherwise be just another fantasy becomes, briefly, believable. ❐

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Hung-Up Henry

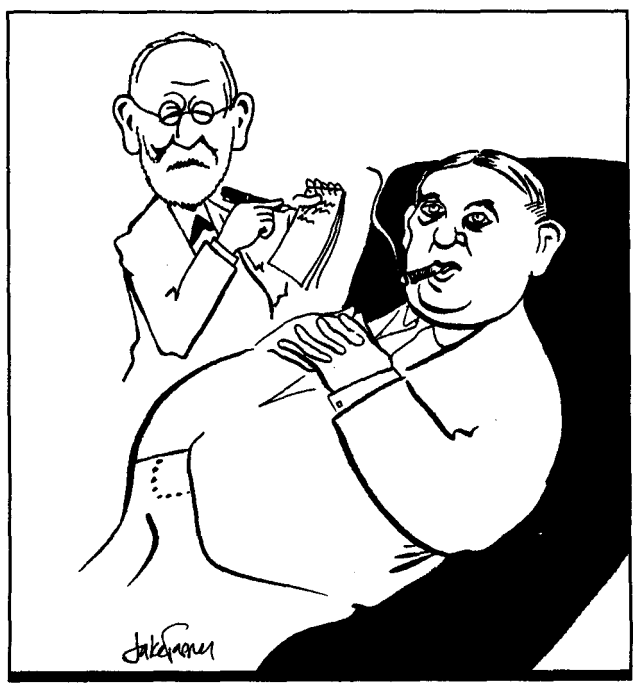
by Kenneth S. Lynn

Professor Hobson's book is the outcome of years of work by a conscientious scholar.[1] No earlier biography of Mencken is nearly as informative. At the same time, it is almost never equal to the challenge of its materials, even when the issue at hand is Menckenian humor. Among the many superb examples of the Baltimore bad boy's risible power that go unrelished in *Mencken: A Life* is the ridicule he lavished upon the custodians of the genteel culture who set out to destroy Theodore Dreiser's *The "Genius"* (1915).

Although Mencken was Dreiser's doughtiest champion, he heartily disliked the prolix story the novelist told in *The "Genius"* of a womanizing young artist named Eugene Witla. But when John S. Sumner, the infamous Anthony Comstock's successor as the head of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, was able to prevent the distribution and sale of the book by citing instances in the text that "proved" it to be in blasphemous and obscene violation of a long-established code of decency, Mencken persuaded scores of creative artists, ranging from Robert Frost and Edwin Arlington Robinson to Willa Cather and Sherwood Anderson, to join him in protesting the ban. And two years later, in the course of a long essay on Dreiser in *A Book of Prefaces*, he devoted a wickedly funny paragraph to the Sumner organization's summation of the moral horrors of young Witla's adventures.

In 1922, Sumner finally agreed to the publication of *The "Genius."* What made his surrender inevitable was the fact that he and his fellow Comstockians had never recovered from the assault on them five years earlier by the most masterful polemicist in the history of American literary journalism:

> The Comstocks arose to the bait a bit slowly, but nonetheless surely. Going through [Dreiser's] volume with the terrible industry of a Sunday-school boy dredging up pearls of smut from the Old Testament, they achieved a list of no less than 89 alleged floutings of the code—75 described as lewd and 14 as profane. An inspection of these specifications affords mirth of a rare and lofty variety; nothing could more cruelly expose the inner chambers of the moral mind. When young Witla, fastening his best girl's skate, is so overcome by the carnality of youth that he hugs her, it is set down as lewd. On page 51, having become an art student, he is fired by "a great, warm-tinted Bouguereau"—lewd again. On page 70 he begins to draw from the figure, and his instructor cautions him that the female breast is round, not square—more lewdness. On page 151 he kisses a girl on mouth and neck and she cautions him: "Be careful! Mama may come in"—still more. On page 161, having got rid of mama, she yields "herself to him gladly, joyously" and he is greatly shocked when she argues that an artist (she is by way of being a singer) had better not marry—lewdness doubly damned. On page 245 he and his bride, being ignorant, neglect the principles laid down by Dr. Sylvanus Stall in his great works on sex hygiene—lewdness most horrible! But there is no need to proceed further. Every kiss, hug and tickle of the chin in the chronicle is laboriously snouted out, empaneled, exhibited. Every hint that Witla is no vestal, that he indulges his unchristian fleshliness, that he burns in the manner of *I Corinthians*, VII, 9, is uncovered to the moral inquisition.



The zestfulness of Mencken's writing has led generations of readers to believe that he was a supremely happy man. Hobson's command of recently released biographical materials as well as of previously known facts leads us to a darker figure. At the age of 17, Mencken had contemplated killing himself. Subsequently, he dismissed the episode as noth-

[1] *Mencken: A Life*, by Fred Hobson. Random House, 650 pages, $35.

Kenneth S. Lynn is at work on a book on the life and times of Charlie Chaplin.

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ing more than a "green sickness of youth." But we now can see that his adolescent longing for death was a prophecy of a psychologically troubled maturity.

In 1927, he spoke of life in one of his *Prejudices* essays as a "progress . . . to the death house," as a "gray emptiness," as "fundamentally . . . not worth living." Hobson points out that this anguished outburst was by no means an aberration, for Mencken had "always concealed" a deep reservoir of pessimism beneath his buoyant public persona. Following the death, in 1925, of his mother, with whom he had continued to live as a grown man, he told a friend that he found it very hard to "reorganize" his ways. In the mid-1930s, he admitted in a letter to a distant relative that "I have had the blues steadily for thirty-five years." In other letters he referred to "doldrums" and "depressions" and to being in "a bad state mentally," and in one of his late autobiographical volumes, *Heathen Days* (1943), he declared that he "suffered from recurrent depressions and despairs."

Unfortunately, Hobson assumes that by marshaling these quotations he has largely fulfilled his biographical obligation to them. Implicit in his proclamation in the first chapter that "Mencken has never been adequately explained" is the fond belief that he, at long last, has done the job. But the ironic truth is that his haunted-mind portrait renders the enigma of Mencken more enigmatic than ever. For although *Mencken: A Life* establishes a connection between a teenaged boy's suicidal impulses and the bitterness he felt about his father's insistence that he abandon his dreams of becoming a newspaperman and go to work instead in the family's cigar factory, it doesn't address the question of whether the boy's extreme reaction to his father's tyranny was rooted in earlier experiences of family life. Nor does Hobson have anything beyond the perfunctory to say about the depressions and despairs that plagued Mencken the man, or about the limits of his self-understanding, or about the possibility that he deliberately misled his confidantes about what was really bugging him.

Additional analytical blanks turn other aspects of Hobson's chronicle into puzzles. An example is a diary entry written at the age of 64 in which Mencken paused to reflect on his literary accomplishments. Along with more than a dozen books, he had written thousands of essays and newspaper articles and more than a hundred thousand letters. Yet the diarist ended this reflection by saying that "my only regret is that I didn't work even harder." Hobson quite appropriately asks, "Why was he so driven to work? What motivated him—particularly if life, as he so often maintained, was meaningless?" Nevertheless, we come away from his book without having received any clarifying answers.

In rich detail, Hobson illustrates Mencken's lifetime habit of making exhaustive lists of his physical problems. Around 1910, for instance, he noted that he was currently suffering from hemorrhoids, hyperacidity, neuralgia, "flabbiness," hay fever, tonsillitis, sore throat, and "tongue trouble." On one particular morning, he was also aware of a pimple inside his jaw, a sour stomach, a pain in the prostate, burning in the "gospel pipe," a cut finger, a small pimple inside his nose, a smarting razor cut, and "tired eyes." Some of these itemizations were surely recorded in a spirit of jest—which Hobson is too sober-sided to catch. But the majority were set down in all seriousness, and Hobson can't think of what to say about them other than to state the obvious—Mencken was "hypersensitive, if not hypochondriacal"—and to agree with the obscurantist comment of August Mencken that his brother "was always working at such a pitch that a slight discomfort or slight ailment that wouldn't disturb the normal person at all, to him was of enormous proportions." Perhaps the truth lies somewhere between brother August's piety and the predictably dire view of Dr. Otto Fenichel's omnium gatherum of psychopathological data, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, that the typical hypochondriac is a conspicuously narcissistic, monomaniacal creature whose dammed-up feelings—whether loving or angry—about other people become focused on the organs of his body; and that, in addition, the complaints of the male hypochondriac are often expressive of a castration anxiety.

In regard to Mencken's sex life, Hobson repeats the commonplace of his biographical predecessors: "In his own period of greatest influence, in the early twentieth century, this archfoe of the Victorian Genteel Tradition was himself, particularly in sexual matters, often Victorian; this most famous twentieth-century opponent of 'puritanism' was, in many respects, a puritan himself." But if Hobson had thought harder about the findings of his research, he might have gone on to wonder whether Mencken was more at ease with complaisant women who were not his social equals than with those who were. In Baltimore, the young bachelor ventured into the night in search of whores, and from one of them he contracted gonorrhea, or so he later told a physician friend. During stays in New York when he was in his thirties, he came to know "a slim, not too young and far from beautiful woman," Kay Laurell, who had "all the arts of the really first rate harlot." But in this case Mencken was attracted not by the harlot's body, but by her fund of inside dope about New York scandals. As he confessed in his 2,000-page reminiscence of "My Life as Author and Editor" (which remained under lock and key in the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore until 1991, when Jonathan Yardley went to work on a shortened edition published last year by Knopf), Laurell's physical appearance "damped" his "natural fires" to such an extent that "more than once I have lain in a bed with her at her apartment without having the slightest impulse to use her carnally."

From 1914 to 1919, he was sexually involved with perkily attractive Marion Bloom, who had grown up in desperate poverty in Carroll County, Maryland. They spent nights together in Washington and New York, and Mencken showered her with letters. Yet while he expressed affection for Bloom, he always held something back, as Hobson trenchantly observes. "I kiss your hand with sentiments of the highest esteem," he would say, or "Need I say that your aspect yesterday was extremely pleasing to the eye." Ultimately, he cast her off. "Following an idyllic afternoon," Bloom would

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recall, he "swatted me cold in Union Station [in Washington] with the statement that if I had a background, financial security, in brief, our affair might be different." He explained his "calculation," she continued, "on the ground that he was a high-born German and had it in him to desire his wife to make a fine showing before his world." "Merely writing famous books," she bitterly concluded, "doesn't make a gentleman in my definition of the word." In saying that, was Bloom moved by a premonition of how contemptuously she would be dealt with in Mencken's memoirs? Although *My Life as Author and Editor* covers the years of their romance, it refers to her only once, in a footnote to an appendix, as "a woman with whom [Willard Huntington] Wright, Claire Burke and I used to dine in the Italian restaurant in Lexington Avenue."

Hobson shows that a number of women entertained serious hopes of marrying Mencken. The most glamorous of the lot was a sophisticated and cultivated Hollywood beauty, Aileen Pringle, who came from a prominent San Francisco family and had attended schools in London and Paris before achieving success as a movie actress. Hobson asserts that "her letters make it clear that [she and Mencken] were surely lovers." But if he means by that that they were sexually intimate, he is pushing his evidence. For her protestations that "I am the most love sick individual to whom you have ever written a line" and her exclamations of "how I adore and worship you" prove nothing about their physical relationship. Furthermore, Mencken refused an invitation to spend his entire visit to Los Angeles under her roof in the fall of 1926, and in the course of the next two years he managed to keep a whole continent between them, even though Pringle was "always wondering when next we will meet." With her dazzling combination of breeding, brains, and beauty, she may very well have induced an anxiety in Mencken that caused him to shy away.

In any event, he never proposed to her. Instead, he chose to marry Alabama-born Sara Haardt, a teacher of English at Goucher College. Haardt shared many of the feisty ideas of the author of *Prejudices* about puritanism, the booboisie, and the cultural achievements (i.e., the lack thereof) of the American South. Yet in spite of the liberated character of her intelligence, she soon became all but totally dependent on Mencken. That he rejoiced in his position of authority in her life is undeniable, even though her dependence was in large part based on the grim state of her health. Within months of their first meeting in the spring of 1923, a lesion was found on one of her lungs. Six years later, doctors discovered a tubercular infection in her left kidney. After the kidney was removed, she was informed that she probably had no more than three years to live. At which point Mencken vowed he would marry her and make her final years as happy as possible.

In the wake of her death, Mencken's renewed eligibility for a trip to the altar aroused thoughts of matrimony in the minds of more than a few of his women friends, including Aileen Pringle. In all likelihood it was in early 1940—the year Mencken turned 60—that she wrote him a pointed letter. His response to it makes poignant reading:

> I am too immensely fond of you to even think of hail and farewell. But there always remains the uneasy feeling that you have deceived yourself—that the whole thing is simply an illusion. . . . You are still young, and beautiful, and still eager for life, and the best of it is ahead of you. But I am beginning to crack, and in a few years I'll be a sad sight indeed. . . . What is ahead for me? I see a few more books (if, in fact, I can actually pump up the energy to write them), and then a long dullness. I have practiced a trade that uses men up, and leaves them empty. It looks easy now when I have (at least transiently) an audience, but getting that audience was a violent and exhausting business, and now I have no respect for it. . . . Maybe there is something left and maybe there isn't. But it would distress me horribly to see you sharing that chance. You are infinitely charming even to think of it.

The discrepancy between Mencken's burning desire to humiliate morally inhibited men like John Sumner and his entrapment within his own hang-ups was only one of the contradictions in his make-up that await explanation by future biographers. Although he hated the South with a vengeance, he refused to move to New York when he had the chance, and he proclaimed himself a Southerner. He salted and peppered his conversation with racist references to "coons" and "blackamoors," at the same time that he opened his home to black writers and published their works in the magazines he edited. While he jeered at businessmen as boobs, he took enormous pride in his service on the board of directors of the *Baltimore Sun*. Unquestionably, he was a vile-mouthed anti-Semite—but his latest biographer is right to emphasize that for a considerable period of years *most* of his closest friends and associates were Jewish. For decades, he worked brutally hard to acquire and hold a readership, only to lose his respect for it. In the self-assessment he offered to Aileen Pringle at 60, the hypochondriacal author spoke of feeling empty and used up. Yet he did so in order to let Pringle down easy. For in a stunning act of self-renewal, he produced three best-selling volumes of autobiography between 1940 and 1943. All three of them are charming—and all of them are masks that offer few hints of his complexity. ❐

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Hate Trick

by Grover G. Norquist

In the 1930s, traditional Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and Orthodox Jews were valued members of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Coalition. Today, they are the target of a coordinated campaign of vilification that has seen them denounced as the "fire breathing Christian radical right" by Vic Fazio, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; the "unchristian religious right" by Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders; and "card carrying members of the flat earth society" by Democratic consultant Mark Wellman. The Democrats are panicking, not just in the face of this fall's elections, but in the realization that Reagan Democrats are becoming Republicans for the long haul.

The most dramatic sign of the shift are religious/political organizations such as Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. Religious conservatives, who only twenty years ago were central to Democratic domination in Virginia, today form the bulwark of a Virginia Republican Party whose convention this spring—attended by a record 14,400 voting delegates—put Oliver North on the senatorial ballot. The 1994 Texas Republican convention that elected Reaganite Tom Pauken state party chairman drew 6,004 delegates, a historic high for the state.

James Carville had bragged that the White House would bring evangelical Christians back into the Democratic fold with an unprecedented number of presidential visits and White House invitations. If anyone was cut out for the task it was Carville, but early Clinton policies so offended grassroots Christians that one-on-one courting of evangelical leaders proved futile and was abandoned. Democrats now hope to neutralize the religious right by demonizing it, betting that fears of intolerance will boost the turnout among their liberal base for the November election. There are growing signs, however, that it is Republicans who are being energized by this year's more-volatile-than-usual politics. Michael Barone, a columnist at *U.S. News & World Report* and author of *The Almanac of American Politics*, points out that the Democrats' share of the two-party vote in the California primary fell from 57 percent to 53 percent from 1990 to 1994.

Clinton supporters hope attacks on the religious right will distract voters and the press from a lengthening menu of domestic scandals and foreign policy bungling, and divide the GOP by heightening long-time liberal Republican fears about these newcomers to the Republican coalition. Congenital Republicans are themselves made uncomfortable by a more crowded party, and its many new and unfamiliar faces. Once known as "Rockefeller" Republicans, they used to argue that the party must broaden its appeal—by moving left. Instead, they now see the local caucuses swell in number and activism with new members who are solidifying the conservative nature of the modern GOP.

The Democrats' strategy is fraught with danger. A *U.S. News* poll last March found that 65 percent of Americans think religion is losing its influence in America, while 62 percent say that religion is increasing its influence in their own lives. This is not the portrait of a nation of individuals hostile to religion and fearful of too much religion in public life. Self-identified church-going evangelicals, Protestants, and Catholics represent 39 percent of all registered voters. The Christian Coalition itself has 1.2 million dues-paying members, and 18–20 percent of Americans identify themselves as members or supporters of it.

The ecumenical alliances such groups can form may be even broader than that, for strong bonds have developed between traditional Catholics, Orthodox Jews, and evangelicals. The Christian Coalition worked directly with John Cardinal O'Connor of New York in distributing 2 million voter guides for the fall 1993 school board elections: 56 of 80 pro-family candidates won. Another 300,000 flyers were distributed in Philadelphia in May in a similar joint effort between the archdiocese and the Christian Coalition. The Coalition has long worked with Toward Tradition, a Jewish organization led by Rabbi Daniel Lapin.

Attacking religious conservatives is not a new strategy, and in the past two years it has not been a successful one. In the 1993 Los Angeles mayor's race, Democrat Michael Woo ran television commercials attacking Richard Riordan as a pawn of Pat Robertson. Riordan ran strongly with Orthodox Jews and Catholics, and won 54 to 46 percent. In Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, a minister and the former president of the Arkansas Baptist Convention, survived an attack on his religious background to become lieutenant governor—the first statewide Republican victory in twelve years.

Last summer, Mary Sue Terry enjoyed a 29-point lead in Virginia's gubernatorial race, when Democrats began to denounce Republican candidates as puppets of Pat Robertson. Evangelicals cast 38 percent of the votes, double their 1992 turnout, to sweep Republican George Allen into office, 58 to 41. Republicans picked up six additional seats in the House of Delegates.

Grover G. Norquist is the president of Americans for Tax Reform.

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Post-election polls showed that only 15 percent of Virginians thought Terry had done "the right thing" in linking Allen to Robertson; 78 percent said she should have focussed on other issues.

Democrats point to the defeat of home-schooling leader Mike Farris in Virginia's race for lieutenant governor last year against Don Beyer. But unlike George Allen, who won 75.5 percent of the evangelical vote, Farris took only 60.9 percent, suggesting his loss is better explained by his being a first-time candidate running against a popular and better-funded incumbent. (In fact, Farris won more votes than any of the state's losing Democratic candidates.)

Republicans have helped themselves with a unified, forceful response to Fazio's attacks. All forty-four Senate Republicans signed a letter asking President Clinton to disavow his party's attacks on religious Americans. Party chairman Haley Barbour and National Republican Congressional Committee chairman Bill Paxon have been unapologetic in defending these new Republican activists and urging candidates to counterattack.

Republicans are vulnerable to Fazio's strategy only when they go on the defensive. Last May, GOP candidate Mark Neuman was poised to defeat Peter Barca in a Wisconsin congressional race to replace Les Aspin. But he called his Sunday church-going "a far cry from being a religious fanatic," and distanced himself from an independent pro-life mailing on his behalf, saying, "That's not what I'm running on." Pro-life and evangelical voters were not impressed, and Neuman lost by 675 votes. In Georgia, by contrast, moderate pro-choice Senate candidate Paul Coverdell owed his narrow victory to the support of the Christians and pro-lifers he had courted.

A sure sign the offensive against the religious right is backfiring is the number of Democrats who've stepped forward to disavow it, including two sitting members of Congress. Kentucky Rep. Scotty Baesler announced he would take no money from Fazio's committee, and called for Joycelyn Elders's resignation. Texas Rep. Charlie Stenholm said: "I am not associated with bashing the Christian Coalition. I vote with them more than I disagree with them."

The Democrats could have asked for better messengers. Republicans have driven home the irony of Fazio's role as a champion of "tolerance," given his own abstention from a congressional vote condemning the anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic outpourings of Louis Farrakhan's aide Khalid Muhammad. Even a report by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith did more harm than good, leading conservative Jewish leaders, columnists, and organizations to rally to the defense of conservative Christians in politics. With material supplied by the likes of People for the American Way, the ADL's 179-page "book" turned out to be a cut-and-paste collection of attacks on the Christian Coalition, Phyllis Schlafly, Paul Weyrich, and others. It even takes literally columnist Robert Novak's saying of Weyrich, "I'm supposed to be the Prince of Darkness, but Paul's the only other person who's so tough he gets hate mail from Mother Teresa"—comments Novak delivered at a roast honoring Weyrich on April Fool's Day, 1991. ❐

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reviewed by DONALD LYONS

Poetry in high school in the 1950s was largely nineteenth-century American; it was *Evangeline* and *Barbara Frietchie* and *To a Waterfowl* and *The Rhodora* and *The Man with the Hoe*; it was didactic and high-minded, full of the beauty of nature and the dignity of man. I couldn't wait to escape from it, either back to the lusts of Catullus or forward to the recognizable shudders of Prufrock. In later years, one returned to Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, the loner screwballs who turned out, satisfyingly, to have been greater than all the official bards.

That high-school paideia of yore is long gone, and Allen Ginsberg is doubtless on the curriculum today. Still, both for those of us who grew up with it and for the country itself, it is time, as the twentieth century winds down, for a comprehensive, grown-up retrospective on the songs of the borning nation in the century before this. The job has been done, with admirable fullness, by John Hollander, poet, critic, and A. Bartlett Giamatti Professor of English at Yale, who has edited two Library of America volumes *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century Volume 1: Freneau to Whitman* and *Volume 2: Melville to Stickney, American Indian Poetry, Folk Songs, and Spirituals*. Hollander stays invisible behind his choices, like an Epicurean god; there is no nudging preface. A clue to the volumes' brief lies on the jacket: "In nineteenth-century America, poetry was a part of everyday life, as familiar as a hymn, a love song, a patriotic exhortation." And in this spirit, these volumes extend a cheerful and unjudging welcome to a wide range of utterance, from the corny to the noble, from the demotic to the academic. Such linguistic democracy is unusually appropriate to this anthology, for traffic between the language of life and the language of the book was often a fertilizing agent for American verse of the period.

The dominant dictions of official poetry—eighteenth-century Augustan and nineteenth-century Romantic—both came from England and were duly and dully aped here. What these dictions needed, and at surprising moments got, was a goosing from below.

Early in the century, Philip Freneau is using Popian couplets to plead the superiority of the "natural" Indian to civilization: "Forests destroyed by helots, and by slaves / And forests cleared, to breed a race of knaves." Just so, in 1829, an enslaved black poet, George Moses Horton, expresses his plight thus: "Dear Liberty! Upon thy breast, / I languish to respire." His diction was as enslaved as his body.

The full note of Wordsworthian Romanticism enters U.S. poetry in the 1810s and 1820s with William Cullen Bryant, perpetrator of "To a Waterfowl" and "Thanatopsis" and "Forest Hymn" ("The groves were God's first temples"). He strikes a pleasingly original note in "Summer Wind":

> For me, I lie
> Languidly in the shade . . . and I woo the wind
> That still delays its coming. Why so slow,
> Gentle and voluble spirit of the air?

This is attractive, but it took Whitman, the Whitman whom Emerson described as a cross between the *New York Herald* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, to unshackle this sort of thing from poetic chains of meter and rhyme and from cultural chains of religious restraint: "I loafe and invite my soul, I lean and loafe at my ease . . . observing a spear of summer grass . . . And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves." Whitman saw that, at that time and in that country, "new poetic messages, new forms and expressions [were] inevitable." Speaking of Emerson, he is represented here, at length, and emerges, poetically, as a spinsterly propagandist for the thing Whitman actually did ("Bring me new wine, but wine which never grew," etc.). His popular "Hymn: Sung at the Completion of the Concord Monument" (1836)—"the shot heard around the world"—has become, in a peculiarly and paradoxically American way, his poetic signature.

Meanwhile, snaking through the solemn texts are populist creations like "A Visit from St. Nicholas" by Clement Moore, "Defence of Fort McHenry" by Francis Scott Key, "Home, Sweet Home!" by John Howard Payne, and "The New England Boy's Song about Thanksgiving Day" ("Over the river and through the wood, / To grandfather's house we go") by Lydia Maria Child. There are discoveries in sophisticated light verse by Nathaniel Parker Willis, whose "City Lyrics" starts, "Come out, love—the night is enchanting! / The Moon hangs just over Broadway; / The stars are all lighted and panting— / Hot weather up there, I dare say!" and by John Quincy Adams (*the* JQA), whose witty "To Sally" brilliantly adapts Horace's "Integer vitae" to New World geography.

Longfellow's is the biggest "official" reputation in the first volume. His long poems are scanted: "Evangeline" ("This is the forest

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Donald Lyons is the author of Independent Visions: A Critical Introduction to Recent Independent American Film *(Ballantine).*

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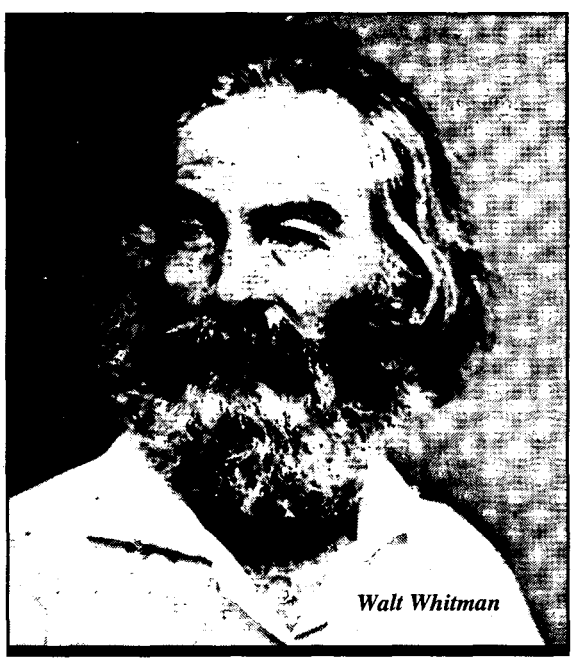
primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks") and "Hiawatha" are here in but a few snippets; no "Courtship of Miles Standish" at all and none of the Dante translation. Reduced to short stuff like "A Psalm of Life" ("Life is real! Life is Earnest!") and "My Lost Youth" ("A boy's will is the wind's will, / And the thoughts are long, long thoughts") and "The Children's Hour," he can look less like the American Tennyson than like the male Lydia Maria Child. That's unfair, though; there is a Robert Frost, too, buried somewhere in Longfellow. Much more modest—indeed, scarcely above the level of folk jingles—appear John Greenleaf Whittier ("The Barefoot Boy"; "Barbara Frietchie") and Edgar Allan Poe ("The Raven"; "The Bells"). Poe's more pretentious versifying is watered Keats. Another imitator of Keats is somebody called Christopher Pearse Cranch, whom we can see, in the thirty-five pages allotted him here, shake off Keatsery and achieve a relaxed, colloquial voice that, in him too, anticipates Frost: "'What are you looking at?' the farmer said; / That's nothing but a yellow flowering weed" or "I heard five bobolinks laughing together / Over some ornithological joke"). Cranch, as we learn from the fascinating short biography in the back (everybody gets one), was an itinerant Unitarian minister in Maine who threw it over to become an artist in Rome and Paris. Emerson, too, went through something like this metamorphosis; it is almost a paradigm of the nineteenth-century Yankee sensibility, which has been described as a Puritanism bereft of God but not of moral struggle.

The Civil War comes to dominate the closing pages of the first volume, not just in popular texts like Daniel Decatur Emmett's "Dixie's Land" ("I wish I was in de land ob cotton"—it was, ironically, written for a minstrel show) or Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" (how close to religion is the language of the century's verse, as in this hymn, and in, for example, Philips Brooks's "O Little Town of Bethlehem") but in Whitman and James Russell Lowell. Whitman's "Drum-Taps" are wartime elegies, and his "Memories of President Lincoln" contains both the vatic romanticism of "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" and the catchy populism of "O Captain! My Captain!"—a duality that encapsulates the history, and the problem, of the era's verse.

Lowell's is, for me, the reputation most enhanced here, not only in the lively nature verse ("And what is so rare as a day in June?"; "May is a pious fraud of the almanac") but in the sprightly literary satire of "A Fable for Critics" and perhaps most in the magnificent "Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration" on July 21, 1865. Acclaimed in its day and worthy of rediscovery in ours, this tribute to the college's and the country's war dead, with its vision of the war as midwife of a new humanity, is truly Pindaric in scope and burden; especially moving is its evocation of Lincoln: "Here was a type of the true elder race, / And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face. . . . New birth of our new soil, the first American."


Walt Whitman

But the sublime highlight, the sexy thrill, of the first volume—of both volumes—is the 1855 text, the one full of ellipses, of *Leaves of Grass*. The shock, the impudence, of its audacity is as vivid as it ever was:

> You sea!
> . . . . . .
> We must have a turn together . . . . I undress . . . . hurry me out of sight of the land,
> Cushion me soft . . . . rock me in billowy drowse,
> Dash me with amorous wet . . . . I can repay you.
>
> Yes!

Randall Jarrell once opined that "Whitman, Dickinson, and Melville seem to me the best poets of the 19th century here in America," adding that "Melville's poetry has been grotesquely underestimated." Volume 2 opens with a generous sample of Melville, but, alas, the century's greatest American fiction writer (well, with James and Twain) proves an undistinguished and derivative versifier, a sort of poor man's Matthew Arnold in diction if not in the pushy nihilism of his thought. He freed himself from his Apollos and Auroras only occasionally, as in "The House-Top" on the Civil War Draft Riots ("The town is taken by its rats") and in "Billy in the Darbies," the incantatory "sailors' ballad" affixed to *Billy Budd*.

Dickinson gets the biggest single chunk of Volume 2, and deserves it. Her tricky little telegrams from the battlefields of suffering and death, a terrain she is shyly and slyly but firmly determined to shame God away from, are endlessly haunting: "I died for beauty—"; "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died"; "The Heart asks Pleasure—first—And then—Excuse from Pain—And then—those little Anodynes That deaden suffering"; "What care the dead for Winter? Themselves as easy freeze—June Noon—as January Night—"; "I cannot live with You—It would be Life—and Life is over there—Behind the Shelf"; "With Midnight to the North of Her—And Midnight to the South of Her—And Maelstrom—in the Sky." It was fitting, it was almost necessary, that the century's two great outcasts, the extrovert and the introvert, should have signaled their breaks with the theological and psychological decorums of their time in their very punctuation: in Whitman's dreamily embracing and seductive ellipses and in Dickinson's sharp, tortured, questioning dashes. Hollander's selection from the Dickinson corpus omits, it almost goes without saying, the greeting-card cuteness about mushrooms and butterflies and hummingbirds that used to figure almost exclusively in school textbooks. →

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Late in the century, fresh themes occur in its verse. California pops up, for example, in Edward Rowland Sill's "California Winter" ("This is not winter: where is the crisp air, / And snow upon the roof, and frozen ponds . . . ?") and in the Cherokee poet John Rollin Ridge, who can also claim pioneer status in white maiden-handsome brave verse in his "Stolen White Girl":

> Though he stole her away from the land of the whites,
> Pursuit is in vain for her bosom delights. . . .
> The contrast between them is pleasing and rare,
> Her sweet eye of blue, and her soft silken hair . . .

New England gets replaced as the favorite locale of popular song and verse (the two now become much closer) by a Southland viewed through lenses of nostalgia and prettifying sentiment by *both* sides; we find "Old Folks at Home" ("Way Down upon de Swanee ribber"), "My Old Kentucky Home, Good-Night" (". . . the darkies are gay . . ."), and "Susanna" ("I come from Alabama with my Banjo on my knee") by Stephen Foster; there's "Marching through Georgia" by Henry Clay Work, author also of the temperance song, "Come Home, Father!"; there's "Maryland" by James Ryder Randall and "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" by James A. Bland. Much of this was in fact written for the minstrel stage, as the full notes tell us; this stage was one factor in the coarsening of popular taste observable in the waning century. Light verse becomes so light, so coy that Whittier looks like Milton: James Whitcomb Riley ("The Old Swimmin'-Hole," "When the Frost Is on the Punkin," "Little Orphant Annie") and Eugene Field are cases in point. On the other end of the scale, much serious verse gets arty and precious, straying away from the tongue and the lives of the people. True, minor poets early in the century had written sonnets on works of Michelangelo or Raphael or on the Laocoön. What had been a trickle became a freshet as more and more poetasters got a taste of Rome and Paris: George Santayana rhapsodizes over Michelangelo ("What beauteous form beneath a marble veil . . ."); Trumbull Stickney is stricken by Rodin and by a never-never Greece; the great Edith Wharton has a go at capturing Chartres in sonnets. A pale Orientalism colors the chinoiserie of Stuart Merrill ("Oh my Li of the jasper nails . . .") and the japonaiserie of Ernest Fenollosa ("O happy children of blest Japan"). All these exoticisms—classical, medieval, oriental—derive from the European Decadents and look no more vital, no less languid in American garb.

Two writers manage the old noble strain: Katharine Bates in "America the Beautiful" (written "after an outing to Pike's Peak in a prairie wagon") and Emma Lazarus on the Statue of Liberty in "The New Colossus." Lazarus was an unusual woman and an interesting minor poet; her "Long Island Sound," which begins "I see it as it looked one afternoon / In August . . ." strangely prefigures the passage at the end of *The Great Gatsby*. One of the surprises of this volume is satirist Ambrose Bierce's "To the Bartholdi Statue," which takes a dimmer view than Lazarus of the Lady with the Lamp:

> Behind you, unsuspected,
> Have you the axe, fair wench,
> Wherewith you once collected
> A poll-tax from the French?

With the exception of this and of Twain's hilarious parody-elegy from *Huckleberry Finn*, real satire rears its head rarely in these pages. But speaking of elegies, the polymath John Jay Chapman writes an elegy on Bismarck remarkable for a sustained pitch of prophetic hatred; he sounds a truly Shelleyan note of anger without any Shelleyesque affectation; his son became the first American aviator killed in World War I, the war Chapman's poem foresees.

The century ends with two strong voices whose laconic, stony stoicism contrasts refreshingly with the surrounding decor of aestheticism: Edwin Arlington Robinson and Stephen Crane. But knowing what we do of what was to come—the high tide of Modernism—we feel by the end the presence in the wings of Pound and Frost and Eliot and Stevens and Williams. How ready was the American tongue for their new ways with it.

Hollander concludes with two important separate sections. First, he prints some 100 pages of nineteenth-century versions of American Indian poetry, supplemented in some instances by pictographs. Some of it is strictly formulaic—"If the clouds come good, our tobacco will grow. We will be happy" (c. 1859)—but all these translations have an immense interest as representing the white ear's nineteenth-century hearing of the Indian. One translator stands out, the great pioneer anthropologist Franz Boas; he imports, or finds, a spareness, a dryness, a wit, e.g., "Because my relations are dead, / When the steamboat leaves, I cry" or "Ya, always I long / For my husband in California" or "I don't care / If you desert me. / Many pretty boys are in the town" or "Nobody loves me, she is the greatest of all, I walk inland . . . They love me only on account of the food I obtain for them" (all c. 1888-94). Since translation is creation in poetry, Boas can be called a decent minor poet of the period. (Again, I wish Hollander had been more generous with translation in general.)

Finally, there is a rich collection of (mostly) anonymous folk songs and spirituals. The folk songs are mainly whoopees or laments from the white wild West: "The Cowboy's Lament"; "Cripple Creek"; "The Days of '49"; "Jesse James"; "Oh My Darling Clementine"; "Shenandoah"; "A Home on the Range." In the toughness and the longing of these songs can be glimpsed the roots of country music. The spirituals express, often in Biblical terms, the pain of black bondage and the ecstasy of release: "Deep River"; "Free at Last"; "Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jerico"; "Let My People Go"; "Michael Row the Boat Ashore"; "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Had"; "My Lord, What a Morning." This poetry *is*, of course, gospel in full flower, and from gospel was to emerge the secular blues.

It is a testament to the welcoming spirit that has pervaded both volumes that the final insertion of these two groups feels quite harmonious with the entire enterprise and smacks not at all of dogmatically inclusive multiculturalism. In the noisy barn dance that was American poetry in the century when the country was learning how to sing in its own voices, high and low—gregarious and solitary—somehow joined hands. ❐

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DEAD RIGHT

David Frum

A New Republic Book–Basic Books / 230 pages / $23

reviewed by ROBERT D. NOVAK

Like just about everybody else who worries about the condition of conservatism and the Republican Party, Canadian journalist David Frum, formerly of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes*, has a gloomy diagnosis. He observes the obvious symptoms: deep and rancorous division, absence of common purpose, and lack of leadership. But he also perceives an overriding failing that explains all else.

Frum's indisputable contention is that the conservative movement of the past half century has been founded on "anti-Communism abroad and radical reduction in the size, cost and bossiness of the federal government." With the former issue essentially resolved, conservatives have tired of the latter. Which leads to his highly disputable premise:

> Radical criticism of the very idea that Washington should extract and redistribute one-quarter of the nation's wealth has simply petered out. The single-parent family, tumbling educational standards, immigration, crime, ethnic balkanization—the conservative magazines and conservative conversation bubble with ferment over these . . . but [conservatives'] fervor for eliminating the progressive income tax and the redistribution of wealth via Washington has cooled, when it has not disappeared altogether. . . . You can feel conservative attention wandering away from overgovernment to the newer and zestier topics of race and sex. . . . Conservatives have lost their zeal for advocating minimal government not because they have decided that big government is desirable, but because they have wearily concluded that trying to reduce it is hopeless.

Having failed to tame the governmental behemoth during twelve years of Republican rule—and here Frum unfortunately has nothing to say about the treacherous politics of budget-cutting—"the conservatives who had lived through that attack of faintheartedness shamefacedly felt that they had better hurry up and find something else to talk about. And so they have."

The problem with that something else, Frum argues, is that while social conservatism is potentially more popular than economic conservatism, it can degenerate into mere "posturing" once it is severed from a critique of big government. The notorious 1992 Republican convention in Houston is a prime example, testifying "not to the ascendancy of the Right, but to the rebirth of moderate Republicanism." That is, once the kinder, gentler operatives who ran the convention had purged it of anti-government rhetoric, the more incendiary speeches were divorced from any overarching policy or philosophy, and could be caricatured by opponents as a venting of hatred for its own sake. Ultimately, "if minimal government was off-limits—and it was—conservatives found that they did not have anything else of very much weight to say. Hence the triviality and faddishness of so much of conservative political and intellectual life since the mid-1980s." Frum concludes with a rueful reworking of Nixon's remark on Keynes: *We're all big-government conservatives now.*

The author establishes this theme in his opening pages, and devotes much of the book to variations on it—faulting just about everyone in the Republican Party, with the notable exception of David Stockman, who has remained silent in the decade since he betrayed his president and his colleagues by calling their advocacy of big-government containment a sham. Not even Reagan himself is spared. Frum blames him not only for not tackling big government but also for permitting the left to cement its foothold.

Frum divides post-Reagan conservatives into three subgroups: Jack Kemp's "optimists," Bill Bennett's "moralists," and Pat Buchanan's "nationalists," slackers all in the war against big government. Frum sees Kemp's enterprise zones and tenant ownership of public housing as at best a truce with big government and at worst an aggrandizement of it—raising suspicions that it is not so much welfare as bureaucratic inefficiency that empowerment conservatives object to. The "dead end" of optimist ideology, Frum writes, is the public-school voucher movement, which will "inflict all the vices of the public sphere upon the private." He concludes that the overwhelming defeat of school choice by California's voters last year shows that "ordinary Americans seem to recognize this risk better than the conservative intellectual elite."

Frum then indicts Bennett for "a predisposition to use state power" to achieve social goals. "Rather than liberate the innate virtues of the common man with libertarian public policy," Frum writes, "Bennett thinks that conservative politicians and any future conservative government must exhort them to improve their standard of conduct." Bennett is berated for not dismantling the Department of Education when he was secretary and, implicitly, for hiring Chester Finn as an assistant secretary. Because of Finn's activist educational theories, Frum warns, "from the point of view of conservative ideology, we have arrived at a new destination, where the federal government is fully *parens patriae*, charged with responsibility for, among so many other things, the intellectual development of every resident."

Even the doughty champion of paleoconservatism, Pat Buchanan, has fallen victim to the big-government malady, Frum insists. Buchanan's policies on trade and immigration are seen as endorsing the views of columnist Sam Francis (described as "Buchanan's friend and idea-man") that

Robert D. Novak is a nationally syndicated columnist, a television commentator, and editor of the Evans and Novak Political Report.

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conservatives should no longer "dwell on limiting the size of government but rather on the issue of who and what controls government." More specifically, Frum relies on Buchanan's 1992 campaign in New Hampshire to describe him as "accepting a federal responsibility for promoting industry." While dismissing the hysteria over the "pseudo-menace of the religious right," Frum nonetheless asserts that the Christian activists who have joined Republican ranks aren't psychologically predisposed to taking on the welfare state: "Spend any time listening to the sermons of Pentecostals and Baptists, and it strikes you that they think of God very much in the same way that Great Society liberals thought of government: a distant benevolent agency that showers goodies upon all those who ask, without demanding anything very much in return."

Frum's melancholy prescription for the right is a bit of an anti-climax: In order to revive itself, the conservative movement "just has to step backward from presidential and congressional politics." In other words, forget about playing to popular tastes and sustain a few election defeats. Instead of drafting campaign manifestos, conservative intellectuals "should be showing the public the necessary connection between the social pathologies it loathes and fears and the social programs it rather likes." It is odd to read his book at a time when anti-government conservatives are poised to make their most significant electoral gains since 1980.

Frum is an adept writer and for the most part has not succumbed to the overheated anxiety over the nationalist right that marred his attack on Buchanan in *The American Spectator* (July 1991; see also my exchange with Frum in the August 1991 *TAS*). But for all of the time he has spent in American journalism, he remains a Canadian and perhaps does not quite understand this country and its politics as well as he thinks.

The notion that conservatives and Republicans have chosen to fight about values as a way to avoid the more difficult task of cutting back government turns reality on its head. The great majority of Republicans in Congress and the leading presidential contenders are so terrified by the ghost of the Houston convention that they hesitate to talk about values. Today's GOP lawmakers pore over the federal budget with far greater attention than they bestow on Dr. Bennett's index of cultural indicators. While Frum hits the target squarely in regard to Kemp's embrace of big government, the fact is that Kemp is isolated.

What ails conservatism and the Republican Party is a spiritual emptiness that admits to no single, simple diagnosis. Today's Republican leaders—as professional politicians—can neither relate to the spiritual hunger of their fellow Americans nor understand how bitterly unhappy they are about the state of the nation and its government. It would take a lot more than an assault on deficit spending to cut through that malaise. ❐

A FISH IN THE WATER: A MEMOIR

Mario Vargas Llosa

Farrar, Straus & Giroux / 532 pages / $25

reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

Mario Vargas Llosa's run for the presidency of Peru was a matter of intense interest. He was that rarest of creatures: a creative intellectual who broke with the left's orthodoxies to endorse free market economics and denounce statism publicly. Moreover, he challenged the common view that intellectuals should stay out of politics, lest it blunt their creative abilities or tempt them to make the compromises so deadly to originality.

We know how his effort ended. He placed first with 45 percent in the multi-candidate first round of Peru's 1990 election, but in the second, two-candidate round could not increase that percentage and was defeated by Alberto Fujimori. Of course we cannot know how Vargas would have done as president, or what would have become of him as an intellectual after five years in office, but the two years he spent campaigning provided wonderful material for him as an author.

This volume of memoirs will not disappoint fans of his novels (among whom I count myself). This is an autobiography as well as a political record, alternating chapters that tell the story of his life with those that tell the story of the campaign. The autobiographical material will be familiar to those who know his novels. I do not propose to cover those chapters much here, although most readers will find them—especially those about his childhood—beautifully written and deeply interesting. Vargas had a very difficult childhood, with a detested father repeatedly disappearing and reappearing at precisely the wrong moments. (Psychiatrists will note that, after scores of pages about his battles with and resentment of his father, he reports the latter's death *in a parenthesis*.)

Vargas's analysis of Peru and of his own campaign is penetrating. He understands completely the damage done by a huge and corrupt state: "In an underdeveloped country, exactly as in a totalitarian one, the government *is* the state and those in power oversee it as though it were their own private property, or, rather, their spoils." He describes with the detailed attention of an entomologist the parasites at all levels of government and politics who "were all followers of the moral philosophy summed up in the precept: to live without money from the state is to live in error." His analyses of the Peruvian intellectual class, their pens most often available to whoever is bidding the highest, their tickets to Miami in one pocket and their denunciations of the imperialist monster in another, help explain why no challenge to the left emerged until 1990.

Elliott Abrams, former assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

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Why did Vargas run for president? He wished to put into effect a program of reforms that would end statism and open the economy of Peru. That a novelist should have such an ambition, natural enough for a politician, will no longer surprise anyone who reads to the end of this book. He was captivated by politics as a youth, spent his university years deeply immersed in it—in the Communist left, at first—and never lost his fascination for it. His wife understood this fascination well, and when Vargas assumed the leadership of the opposition to President Alan Garcia's 1987 nationalization of the banks, she saw precisely where it was leading. When he announced he would lead only one march, she told him "then there'll be another and another and you'll end up being a candidate for president." During the campaign, Vargas's enemies made a series of false accusations about his wealth, and accused him of tax evasion. He notes that he was clean, because "knowing very well that should I one day enter politics everything about my life would be gone over with a fine-tooth comb in search of my vulnerable points, I had been particularly scrupulous about my annual income tax returns." In the end, Vargas ran both to promote his deeply held ideas about how to "fix" Peru, and because, as his wife put it, "it was an adventure, the illusion of living an experience full of excitement and risk."

Why did he lose? How was it that a brilliant and world-renowned Peruvian with a program that could bring real progress to Peru was rejected in favor of an apparent non-entity, an obscure Japanese-Peruvian agricultural engineer? Vargas's attempt to answer this question is the heart of the book.

First, he could not retain the support of poor Peruvians, for his candidacy appeared to them to be supported by the country's rich elites. Vargas was often buoyed by the large demonstrations supporting him, but

> anyone who had sat down with a cool head to add and subtract and attentively observe the sort of people who attended those marches and rallies would have had reservations: those who took part in them represented almost exclusively the third of Peruvians with the largest incomes. Although a minority, there were enough of them to fill the squares of Peruvian cities, above all now that, for one of the few times in our history, those middle and upper classes had backed, en bloc, a political plan. But there were the remaining two-thirds, all those Peruvians who had been most impoverished and most frustrated by the national decline of recent decades—including those who had once been interested by my proposals only to have their interest flag out of fear, confusion, and displeasure at the manifestation, in the last months of the campaign, of what appeared to be the old elitist, arrogant Peru of the whites and the rich, something that our advertising contributed to as much as did the campaign of our adversaries.

This last remark refers to the excessive spending on advertising by Vargas's allies during the congressional election campaign that preceded the presidential campaign by only a few months. It seemed to many Peruvians an arrogant demonstration of wealth and economic power, a sure sign that Vargas and his allies were indeed the party of the rich. Vargas is emphatic that the congressional campaign waged by his party coalition was fatal to his own presidential effort.

There was a second and related problem: Vargas had first appeared as something entirely new in Peruvian politics, but as the months went by he seemed more and more just another rich politician. He joined with two center/right parties in a coalition, knowing that he would need their votes not only to win but also to govern. By the time the elections came, it was Fujimori who seemed truly a new face, with a brand-new party of his own, a non-white who clearly did not belong to the old upper classes.

Finally, Vargas lost because he was attempting something extremely difficult to begin with: to win through the power of ideas. He wanted to convey

> that to vote for me was to vote for certain concrete reforms, so that there would be no misunderstanding concerning what I intended to do or the sacrifices that it would cost. . . . I don't believe that I succeeded in putting across either of these two things. For Peruvians did not vote for *ideas* in the elections. . . . The decision as to which candidate to vote for was made, in the overwhelming majority of cases, on the basis of the personalities of the people running for office and out of obscure impulses, and never on account of the programs the voters were offered.

This is true beyond the borders of Peru as well. None of the presidents who have undertaken deep economic reforms in Latin America—not Salinas in Mexico, nor Menem in Argentina, to take the best examples—said one word about such reforms in their campaigns. Vargas may have overloaded the circuits by trying to educate a nation—or as he puts it at one point, "making the country moral"—in the course of one presidential contest.

He emerges, unsurprisingly, with a jaundiced view of politics. Once he starts meeting with the other two parties in his coalition, he sees how it will be.

> Now that I had become involved, I made a depressing discovery in these tripartite meetings: that real politics, not the kind that one reads and writes about, thinks about and imagines (the only sort I was acquainted with), but politics as lived and practiced day by day, has little to do with ideas, values, and imagination, with teleological visions—the ideal society we would like to create—and, to put it bluntly, little to do with generosity, solidarity, and idealism. It consists almost exclusively of maneuvers, intrigues, plots, paranoias, betrayals, a great deal of calculation, no little cynicism, and every variety of con game.

Vargas is entitled to this view, which he earned in several arduous years of political activity. If it seems a bit excessive, his is a cautionary tale. Not because it took him away from literature for a while (a loss balanced by the appearance of this book), but because it has left him enormously bitter. Vargas writes of "the great Peruvian sport of *raje*—badmouthing" and it is apparently one of his own favorite pastimes. Scores of Peruvians are maligned, by name, as drunks, dullards, sloths, fools, ignoramuses, and sell-outs. This book is his payback to a lifetime's worth of enemies, and the meanness of spirit gets tiresome.

He is at his most vicious when discussing Hernando de Soto, author of the famous book *The Other Path*, which intro-

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duced the idea of the informal economy to readers around the world. De Soto and Vargas were once close friends and political allies, but the friendship was destroyed by politics. Vargas devotes a full four pages to attacking and maligning De Soto in the nastiest possible terms: "a slightly pompous and ridiculous figure," "more ambitions than principles," "sly self-promotion," and the like. Vargas is especially angry that De Soto collaborated with President Fujimori, for Fujimori came to office having denounced the free market reforms Vargas was proposing. But De Soto helped convince Fujimori that they were essential for Peru, and indeed Fujimori has implemented Vargas's economic program with amazing fidelity. This fidelity Vargas will not admit, nor will he give Fujimori credit for the astonishing progress against the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas (including the capture of its entire top leadership). As for Vargas's claim that De Soto backed Fujimori even after his "autocoup," the fact is that De Soto urged foreign governments to keep heavy pressure on Fujimori until he allowed a democratic opening and called new elections. Suffice it to say that De Soto continues to live in Peru to this day, fully engaged in the struggle for reform and modernization, while Vargas has renounced his citizenship and divides his time between Europe and the United States. Early in the book Vargas tells us that "my vocation is that of a cosmopolitan and an expatriate"; he has lived most of his adult life outside of Peru. This is his privilege, as indeed was his recent decision to adopt Spanish citizenship, but it ill behooves him to malign others who remain Peruvian patriots committed to bringing economic freedom to their homeland.

Who knows just what the Peruvian people voted for, or against, in 1990? Maybe Vargas was too cosmopolitan, too white, too rich for most of them; maybe they were frightened away from Vargas by crude leftist scare tactics and lies; and maybe they voted for the person furthest removed from their old political system. Vargas emerges here as the brilliant writer he has always been, with insights into politics as deep as those he has previously shown about other forms of human endeavor. If he also emerges as a bitter and often nasty man, that too is his privilege. Who ever said a great writer had to be a good pol and a decent human being as well? ❐

SNAPSHOTS FROM HELL: THE MAKING OF AN MBA

Peter Robinson

Warner Books / 284 pages / $22.95

reviewed by JOE QUEENAN

From 1982, shortly after he finished graduate school, until 1988, Peter Robinson worked as a White House speechwriter, first for Vice President George Bush, then for President Ronald Reagan. It was exciting work, challenging work, work that provided numerous psychological rewards, such as assisting the president in rebuilding America's confidence in itself, unleashing the entrepreneurial zeal of the American people, and demolishing the Communist system.

Unfortunately, there wasn't much money in it, so shortly before the end of Reagan's second term, Robinson decided to enroll in the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and get himself an MBA so he could become filthy rich and live happily ever after. Things didn't work out the way he planned; Robinson did obtain his MBA degree, and did briefly land a job with one of Rupert Murdoch's myriad companies. But not long afterwards, Murdoch's empire started to founder and Robinson found himself out on the street, right beside a lot of other recently minted MBAs, including some of his classmates.

Snapshots From Hell, which recounts the torments of Robinson's first, most painful, year at Stanford, is interesting for two reasons, one the deliberate result of the author's efforts, the other an inadvertent byproduct of them. On the one hand, Robinson does a bang-up job as a wise-cracking tour guide through the bizarre universe of business schools, whose syllabuses seem to have almost no relevance to the real world. Recounting his agony while attending such seminars as "Some Useful Derivative Theorems for Finding Derivative Functions Associated With Complicated Original Functions" and "The Geometric Interpretation of a Set of First Partial Derivatives as a Gradient Vector," Robinson portrays Stanford as a Parris Island of the mind, where each succeeding course serves but one function: to humiliate, degrade, and ultimately break the spirit of the student.

Robinson is also successful in portraying business school as a place where most of the teachers lack any real passion for the marketplace, where those standing at the lectern each day emphatically reaffirm the accuracy of the statement: "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." Finally, Robinson explains the logic of MBA programs: They are intellectual gauntlets whose primary function is to determine how much suffering a young person is willing to endure, and how much money he is willing to part with, in order to get a really great job.

The unintended value of *Snapshots From Hell* is that it demonstrates, quite perplexingly, that many conservative Republicans are almost entirely ignorant of the workings of the business world, and more troubling still, aren't particularly interested in the engine that actually drives America. Here we have a graduate of Dartmouth and Oxford who spent four years writing speeches for the most pro-business-president since Calvin Coolidge, yet Robinson, by his own admission, had reached the age of 30 without ever having heard of a spreadsheet. Moreover, at no point in the book does the reader ever get the feeling that the author has actually developed any passion for business while getting his MBA: his ideas on finance and marketing are pedestrian, even after a two-year MBA program, and

Joe Queenan is most recently the author of If You're Talking to Me, Your Career Must Be in Trouble *(Hyperion).*

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his familiarity with the workings of the stock and bond markets is virtually nil.

I personally find these revelations quite disturbing because it confirms something I have long believed: that many on the left and right are united in a weird bipartisan disdain for the machinery that makes our society function. All of my intellectual chums on the right have an encyclopedic knowledge of politics, popular culture, and the media, just like all my egghead friends on the left. But when it comes to the workings of the markets, few of them know as much as the worst reporter at *Business Week*. (And *Business Week* has a lot of bad reporters.) We expect Democrats to think businessmen are thundering bores, but we certainly don't expect it of Republicans.

Snapshots From Hell is thus both diverting and unnerving at the same time. Robinson's Herculean efforts to master "decision trees," "influence diagrams," and "performance-outcome expectancies" are hilarious, as are his attempts to master the workings of the extrusion metals industry. His description of a Microeconomics exam in which he was asked to determine how Snow White should allocate labor among the Seven Dwarves gives the reader a pretty good idea of how reality is perceived out there on the Left Coast. Equally amusing is an exam question involving the great Dallas Cowboys and University of Pittsburgh running back Tony Dorsett, in which Robinson was asked to "calculate an appropriate measure of the central tendency of yards gained per carry in order to evaluate Dorsett's overall performance and justify the measure you have chosen."

Still, it's scary to think that mere possession of an MBA was enough to win Robinson face-to-face interviews—and job offers—from the likes of Robert Maxwell, Steve Jobs, and Rupert Murdoch, despite the fact that he never really displayed any great passion for their enterprises. On an encouraging note, several of his high-powered classmates *did* make it big after graduating, while Robinson, after losing his job with Murdoch, made the wise decision to become a fellow at the Hoover Institution. He will not regret that move: He is a talented writer, but he would have made a dud businessman, and the United States doesn't need any more dud businessmen. On the evidence of *Snapshots From Hell*, Robinson knows it. ❐

DREAM CITY: RACE, POWER AND THE DECLINE OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

Harry S. Jaffe and Tom Sherwood

Simon & Schuster/352 pages/$24

reviewed by M.D. CARNEGIE

He philandered, gladhanded, and backpedaled. He wore leopard print dashikis to Mau-Mau, three-piece suits to pow-wow. Crack cocaine was his smoke of choice, but at least one mistress maintained that he would sprinkle it on her erogenous zones to ingest the drug orally. "I'm just a night owl," he told the press, as reports circulated that his limousine was spotted outside strip clubs and along streets full of hookers in the wee hours. Once behind bars, he was transferred to a different facility after prison officials discovered a female visitor had fellated him—right in front of everyone else in the visitation room.

He, of course, is Marion S. Barry, Jr., a pol who makes Bob Packwood look like Fulton Sheen, Ted Kennedy like a latter-day Lycurgus. When Barry announced his comeback bid for the mayoralty, newspapers around the globe picked up the story: The man videotaped by the FBI sucking on a crack pipe—while mayor of the capital of the free world—was running for re-election. It's an amazing and fascinating tale, but the bloody fifth act remains to be played out. Polls show Barry will run away with the Democratic primary, as current mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly slumbers at a distant third, and in a city where Democrats outnumber Republicans 9-1, his return to the mayor's office seems virtually certain.

How Washington degenerated into its present morass of corruption, crime, and disarray is the ostensible subject of Harry S. Jaffe and Tom Sherwood's *Dream City*, but the real subject is unmistakably Marion Barry. The colorful Barry is the straw that stirs the drink of D.C. politics, even today; when locals talk about the mayor, it's even money he's the one they mean. A dark-skinned sharecropper's son from Itta Bena, Mississippi, he humped and hustled his way up from the beginning. Having moved to Memphis in 1940 when he was four, his family—mom, stepfather, two sisters, two half sisters, three stepsisters—lived in a shotgun shack on the unpaved streets of the South Memphis projects. Barry made his youngest sisters sing for change at the bus stop, and in fifth grade sold sandwiches with the extra meat his stepfather brought home from the slaughterhouse. He became one of the first black Eagle Scouts in Memphis, and made the National Honor Society in high school.

At the city's LeMoyne College, he was so radicalized by two white, liberal professors that he earned the nickname "Shep," after Dmitri Shepilov, a Soviet propagandist. Local racists burned a cross on his mother's lawn after he delivered a fiery speech senior year about "the Negroes' fight against the forces of bigotry," and a civil rights activist was born. Barry signed up for graduate school in chemistry at Nashville's Fisk University to avoid the draft, but his courage and energy impressed so many in the burgeoning civil rights movement that he was elected the first chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

He ended up a few credits shy of a doctorate, but made his way north to Washington, where a firmly established light-skinned black elite had no use for jacket-and-tie sit-ins or the populist rantings of a coal-dark agitator. His savvy political instincts told him that if poor and lower class blacks could be mobilized to displace the civic-minded bourgeois establishment, the city was his for the taking. Barry took street-dude lessons from hoodlum Rufus "Catfish" Mayfield on how to walk the walk and talk the talk; he founded Pride,

M.D. Carnegie is a contributing writer for Washington CityPaper.

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Inc., a self-help organization whose director (his first wife) was later jailed for a laundry list of fiscal improprieties, including pocketing some of the cash to buy herself a Cadillac. He purposely jaywalked in front of a police car to get arrested, then kicked out the windows of the paddy wagon. Charged with destroying government property, Barry—already a respected figure for his civil rights efforts—organized a phalanx of ministers to vouch for his record of nonviolence and his general good character. He walked, and the trial made Barry a household name citywide.

After the establishment of home-rule, by which D.C. residents were allowed to vote for their own leadership after a hundred years of congressional supervision, it was only a matter of time before Barry assumed the top position. Elected first to the school board, he used his position to make contacts and construct a base of power. He moved up to the city council, where the elected chairman appointed him head of the finance and revenue panel. Barry used the powerful seat to consolidate the support of white business, and when he finally ran for mayor, was elected in a landslide.

Jaffe and Sherwood do a wonderful job of detailing Barry's rise to power, and one imagines that the shenanigans that took place after his election almost wrote themselves. He made a mockery of his populist campaign by hopping into bed with the sleaziest developers, who bankrolled him as he eased their way to purchase prime city land during the 1980s real-estate boom for pennies on the dollar. Friends bilked the city for uncountable millions; the price of corn flakes to the public schools went up almost six dollars a carton, and the city's budget ballooned two billion dollars in his tenure. Eventually Washington had more government workers per capita than any other city or state, including New York and Chicago, and per capita expenditures ran about twice the national average.

Even so, services declined and some disappeared altogether. Infant mortality rates far exceeded that of many Third World nations, ambulances routinely got lost or showed up too late, and the child-support collection agency became the only one of its kind in the nation—it repeatedly spent more money than it brought in. Barry promised to "take the boards off" closed-down public housing, but never did; he simply repeated the promise, mantra-like, during re-election campaigns. The school dropout rate soared above 40 percent. His administration was so disorganized that deadlines for filing paperwork were routinely missed or ignored, and hundreds of millions of matching federal dollars fell by the wayside. White flight soon enough was joined by black flight; today the population of 600,000 is 25 percent smaller than four decades ago.

It is a sordid tale, but the decay of the city's infrastructure and the oppression of its citizens is but the half of it; in the end Barry could not rein in his voracious appetites—for women, for booze, and eventually for cocaine. Jaffe and Sherwood report that for about a year before the feds brought Barry down, he had to be awakened mid-morning at his house by his security detail; he would fall asleep at meetings, excuse himself for a toot in the bathroom, and come out reinvigorated. Near the end, during an interview with a Los Angeles reporter, he went off to the bathroom for ten minutes, then returned to tell her that prosecutors would have loved to get hold of his urine sample.

Those who would read Barry's eventual fall from grace as a triumph of our political system, a morality play in which democracy catches up with the despot in the end, risk misunderstanding the peculiar nature of city politics in Washington. And it is here that Jaffe and Sherwood write least convincingly about the wretchedness that has plagued the city for decades. For in addition to the sloth and corruption, this is also a story about race and racism, and though the authors hint at the topic in their subtitle, they never quite get down to brass tacks.

Jaffe and Sherwood note that Barry's populist rise was largely on the wings of a revolt against the light-skinned black elite by the dark-skinned lower class, but they are too timid in outlining the nature of the conflict between the groups. Those familiar with the virulent animosity in this element of black racism can read between the lines to get a fuller picture, but those who do not are likely to come away not understanding what fueled Barry's heady rise to the top. The popular press has accustomed us to believing that racism is what white people do to blacks, and many readers of this worthwhile book are not apt to know much about the mutual resentments between the aristocratic "high-yellow" elite who thought of Barry and his ilk as "cotton pickin' niggers." A fuller explanation of the historical divide would have been helpful.

And though Jaffe and Sherwood offer some background on the racists in Congress who opposed home-rule for so long because they refused to believe blacks in Washington could govern themselves, the authors fail to come to the obvious if unpleasant conclusion—in fact, they haven't been able to. Present mayor Kelly, a judge's daughter and a member in good standing of the light-skinned aristocrats, has done nothing to stem the city's sad decline. She has flirted with the embarrassing idea of asking the National Guard to police the streets. She has mismanaged the budget crisis so poorly that the city edges ever closer to the edge of collapse. She has allowed the decrepit public-housing system to deteriorate further as the worst in the nation—this alone, no small feat. And all the while, she has spent non-existent funds on frivolities and sops—$65 an hour for her personal make-up artist, and hundreds of thousands to bulletproof the windows to her office, which the authors remind us, could only be attacked by helicopter; they're on the eleventh floor.

"We're going to show everyone that black people can really run something," Ivanhoe Donaldson said when Barry was elected to his first term in 1978. Donaldson, a close friend whom the mayor named employment services director, was arrested within eight months for failing to pay his personal bills. Eventually he was sentenced to seven years for embezzling almost $200,000 in city funds. One of the mayor's girlfriends was already in the can, and his first wife went down a year later. Clutching at straws during his trial, Barry embraced Louis Farrakhan in a last-ditch effort to save his behind; he was lucky to have a sympathetic jury that found him guilty on only one of fourteen drug-related counts.

Now Barry is on the rise again. He says he's sober, and makes his public appearances in kente-cloth, traditional African garb that has become a politically charged symbol, like the black fist of the sixties, as the tragic gulf between whites and blacks once again begins to widen. The crowds cheer him on; they love him. His absurd mismanagement and venal criminality has given way to the illusion that he has given his people a seat at the table. But has the man in the leopard dashiki changed his spots? ❐

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ADAMS / BCCI CURTAIN

(continued from page 47)

to mediate between factions on its board when Bert Lance first tried to take it over for Abedi. Perhaps more importantly, in the mid-seventies, Hammer sold a million shares of Occidental Petroleum to a Saudi businessman named Ghaith Pharaon. The son of the physician to the great Ibn Saud, founder of Saudi Arabia, Pharaon was one of the BCCI's main front men in America, buying Bert Lance's National Bank of Georgia and taking a share of Centrust in Miami. He is also a co-defendant with Naqvi on the BCCI indictment and a fugitive in parts unknown.

Stern doesn't see a problem. He came to Occidental Petroleum in 1981, he told the *Spectator*, and never encountered Pharaon. "We never even heard his name when I was there," he said. Stern sounds sincere, but in light of the circumstances, it may be he should be seeking a ruling from the appropriate governmental ethics bodies, such as they are.

But the problem goes far beyond individual embarrassments. Justice simply lacks the stomach to track suspected BCCI influence buying. The letters on the plea bargain show how far D.A. Morgenthau thinks this trail could lead. Naqvi, he complained, "provided significantly inaccurate and incomplete responses to questions about payments made by BCCI to certain officials." A retort from Naqvi's lawyer indicates what sort of payments Morgenthau is looking at. "He has basically said that unless Mr. Naqvi can provide evidence that some United States Senator, Cabinet official or state government official was involved in criminal activity, he will not find Mr. Naqvi 'fully cooperating,'" the lawyer wrote.

The implications are startling but, for the BCCI, hardly surprising. A charge that Abedi's crew had bribed a U.S. senator or cabinet official would transform a somewhat arcane financial fraud into a historic political scandal. But there is more than a chance that Justice has managed to sweep it all under the rug. Although Morgenthau's office plans to proceed with its own case against Naqvi, his defense may be able to get the court to throw it out on the grounds of double jeopardy. ❐

CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 10)

bother to dredge the Ohio River, a chief route for barge traffic since the beginning of America's industrial age, in order to bring hazardous waste to WTI, a competitor? Moreover, our permit prohibits shipments of waste by way of the river. Why, even the *Nation* and *Mother Jones* did not fabricate anything as ludicrous.

A move from zealotry to credible and responsible journalism is in order at the *Spectator*. The readers deserve it.

—Raymond J. Wayne
Public Relations Specialist, WTI
East Liverpool, Ohio

Evan Fitzmaurice's piece is another example of journalism gone awry. It is a messy bundle of gross errors and distortions that has everything to do with politics and nothing to do with facts.

Not only is the article's premise wrong—that a hazardous waste incinerator is operating in Ohio today because of my family's alleged influence over Clinton and his administration—so are the "facts" used to support it.

The premise unravels when one considers the following: Stephens Inc. has not had any involvement with the facility—economic or otherwise—since 1987, when it sold its minority interest. It is ludicrous to assert that our 1992-93 fundraising efforts on behalf of Clinton's presidential campaign—*conducted six years after we divested in the project*—is in any way responsible for the EPA's recent decision to permit the facility to operate.

Equally laughable is the notion that the EPA decision represents a "triumph" for us. Again, we have no interest in the project. We have not had any interest in the project for over seven years.

So much for the premise. Now the facts.

1. Stephens Inc. did not "build" the incinerator. Its ownership was conveyed to Von Roll in December 1987, before construction of the facility began.

2. & 3. Stephens Inc. did not manage to skirt the Army Corps of Engineers requirements to obtain an EPA operating permit. First, Stephens was not involved in the permit process. From June 1981 forward it was a passive minority investor with only a small financial interest in the project and no operational responsibilities. An employee of the managing general partner was the project manager who oversaw the permit processes. Second, it is our understanding that the facility met none of the criteria over which the "Army" has jurisdiction and can require EPA permits: the facility would be built well above the regulatory flood plain; it would have no docking facilities; and, as other permits specified, it would not be receiving or transferring hazardous waste via the Ohio river. Given that the "Army" has no regulatory authority or jurisdiction over these areas, its requirements hardly could have been "skirted."

4. Stephens Inc. did not sell its interest to Von Roll in 1990; it sold it in 1987. Final payment was received in December 1990.

5. Stephens Inc.'s share was not $128 million. Stephens's total consideration for the project was only $2.1 million. It follows then that Fitzmaurice's estimate for potential exposure based on our past shareholding is also meaningless.

6. & 7. Stephens Inc. was not a party to the 1990 loan transactions whereby Union Bank of Switzerland and Morgan Guarantee Trust Company financed Von Roll's acquisition. Therefore, Stephens Inc. is not liable for the debt to UBS and Morgan Guarantee.

Finally, relying on a lot of "ifs" and "coulds" the writer theorizes that Stephens *could* be sued *if* it made "misleading or fraudulent" representations, especially *if* they "jeopardize" EPA contracts. This is not earth-shattering news (we all know that anyone who makes false claims is subject to criminal and civil charges). This is a thinly veiled attempt to insinuate wrongdoing where there was none. Compounding the problem is the author's propensity to toss around trumped-up dollar figures based on flawed formulas and inaccurate numbers.

Mr. Fitzmaurice never bothered to contact us or our lawyers. If he had made the effort, we could have told him that we do not have an interest in the facility; that we did not skirt permit procedures; that we are not liable for the debts of others; that we did not make false representations; and that we are not liable for $400 million. We are not liable, period.

Instead, Mr. Fitzmaurice relied on biased sources and other notoriously inaccurate reporters and their equally error-ridden articles, a rather startling practice for a research assistant, but stan-

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dard-operating-procedure for a political hack with an ax to grind.

—Warren A. Stephens
President, Stephens Inc.
Little Rock, Arkansas

Evan Fitzmaurice replies:
Mr. Stephens attempts to dispel the notion that his company could be exposed to a $400 million judgment should WTI be closed, and further, that his influence with the Clintons has nothing to do with the current operational status of the incinerator. For all the indignation expressed in his letter, Mr. Stephens does nothing to disprove Stephens Inc.'s exposure—indeed, he confirms it when he admits that Stephens sold its interest to Von Roll in 1987, when federal and state permits that allowed WTI to operate were invalid. Stephens Inc.'s influence with the Clintons speaks for itself.

The original WTI partnership, of which Stephens Inc. was the managing partner and 30 percent stockholder under the name Waste Technologies, Inc., was dissolved in 1986, not 1987 as Mr. Stephens suggests. WTI's federal tax return for 1986 reflects the dissolution and exchange of Stephens Inc.'s 30 percent interest first to a subsidiary called Wastetech, and then ultimately to Von Roll (Ohio). In a 1990 report on WTI, Ohio Attorney General Lee Fisher stated: "In its 1986 partnership income tax return, which the Attorney General acquired pursuant to investigative demand, WTI acknowledged that the transfers to Von Roll (Ohio), Inc. and Waste Technologies Incorporated resulted in a 'technical termination for federal tax return purposes' and created a 'new partnership' with a new employer identification number."

This dissolution caused the legal nullification of the 1983 and 1984 state and federal permits to operate the incinerator. When Stephens Inc. sold its share to Von Roll in 1987, the deal was made assuming that the representations made by Stephens to Von Roll about WTI were accurate—including the validity of the permits.

When Von Roll cut a refinancing deal for WTI with the Union Bank of Switzerland and Morgan Guarantee in 1990 for $128 million, that loan was based on the same representations made by Stephens to Von Roll in 1987. Should WTI be shut down because the government determines that WTI's permits were nullified after the 1986 dissolution, the $128 million in refinancing will fall in the lap of Stephens Inc. But because RICO statutes concerning mail fraud allow restitution for three times the original amount, Stephens Inc. could potentially by sued by Von Roll, UBS, and Morgan for just under $400 million.

Even after Stephens Inc. sold its interest in WTI in 1987, the firm continued to renew an option on the sale of WTI bonds through the Ohio Water Development Authority. The bonds were never issued, and Stephens ceased to renew that option in 1993. But since those would have been tax-free, government bonds, and since they would have been based on the same erroneous representations about WTI and its permits, the sale would have constituted fraud against the U.S. government.

Finally, the environmental aspects of this story are not as important to me as the political hypocrisy and conflict of interests surrounding WTI, but in fairness, WTI *is* located in a flood plain. Confirmation comes from a December 29, 1982 letter to the Ohio EPA from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources ("We are seriously concerned about siting this facility in a flood hazard area"), and a 1983 U.S. EPA memo discussing WTI's attempts to get around the flood plain requirement ("the artificial elevation of the site above the floodplain does not remove it from the jurisdiction of the floodplain standard").

Mr. Wayne's letter is no more credible. First, WTI *is* located in a residential, minority neighborhood—in fact, the entire black population of East Liverpool resides in East End, some 400 feet from the incinerator.

Second, the RCRA permit makes WTI one of the largest hazardous waste incinerators in North America. When WTI adds the second kiln permitted by the permit, it will be able to burn 176,000 tons of waste a year.

Third, Von Roll is Swiss-based and not Swedish. My mistake.

Fourth, WTI negotiated contracts with three companies represented by Robert Sussman, chief legal counsel of Chemical Manufacturing Association. While WTI may have dealt directly with the companies, the participation of Sussman is relevant given his later involvement with the issue at the EPA.

Fifth, according to U.S. EPA guidance on trial burns for Region IV, set out by James Scarbrough of the RCRA branch in an October 12, 1987 memo, "a trial burn failure provides substantial support for a permit denial, and this is the course of action that should be taken in all cases except those identified in Item 4." The conditions set out in Item 4 did not apply to WTI. So much for Mr. Wayne's contention that test burns are not a pass/fail procedure. According to Scarbrough, WTI has *not* "demonstrated compliance with all applicable performance standards for hazardous waste incinerators."

Sixth, regarding the plausibility of the LaFarge connection, I merely painted the picture of conflict of interest and appearances that makes WTI look like most every business deal involving the Clintons. Given the backing of the Stephens concern, no hypothetical is implausible.

Pseudo Irish

I was wondering how long it would take the pseudo leprechauns to come dancing out of the woodwork to attack Thomas McArdle's excellent article, "Gerryatrics" (*TAS*, March 1994; Correspondence, July 1994). Perhaps your correspondents enjoyed an excess of Irish whiskey, which

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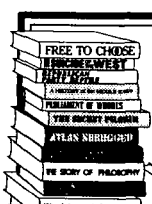

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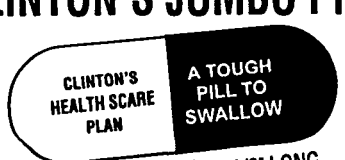

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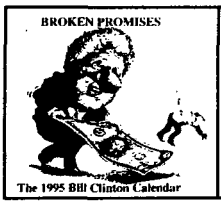

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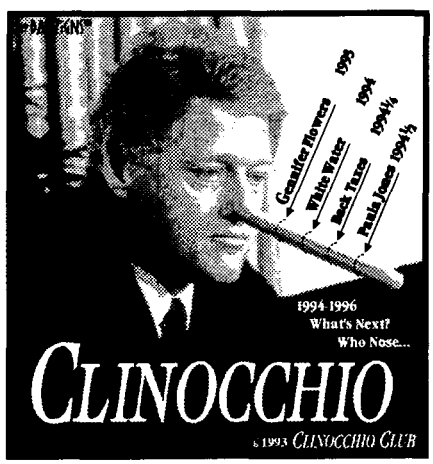

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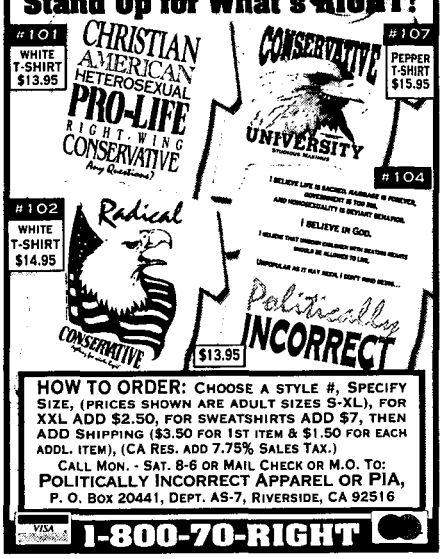

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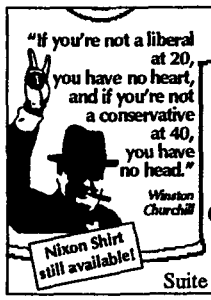
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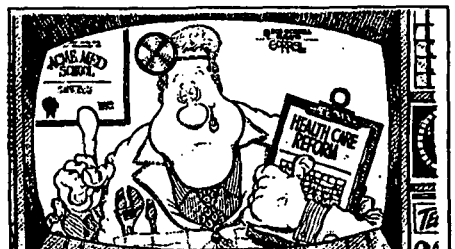

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CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 74)

can produce a wicked hangover. Perhaps they'd just seen that epic liberal tearjerker, *In the Name of the (God)father*. How in the world an entirely factual piece of writing may be labeled "propaganda" is quite beyond me.

"Gerryatrics" leaves very little to add, but a couple of points are worth highlighting. First, Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. The people who live there want England's protection. Surely this point, which has been made ad nauseam, is simple enough even for Messrs. Hunt and Wall to understand. Second, is any other pointer to Clinton's character necessary when we see him, the president of the most powerful nation on earth, cozying up to a vicious terrorist like Gerry Adams? . . . It must be admitted that relatively few incidents of IRA atrocities are reported over here. There are some, therefore, who still see Ireland and the IRA in the romantic light of a green and lovely country being freed from the iron grip of a tyrannical Britain by brave men and true. . . .

But suppose your correspondents aren't the naive people I hope they are. Then they must support terrorism generally and this puts them and others of like mind in a far more sinister light. They can't have it both ways. It seems to me that someone should be a little more careful whom he calls a lackey.

—Mike Bond
Fort Myers, Florida

In the Dumps

Kudos to Fred Barnes for his lucid and painfully accurate, albeit overly generous, portrayal of the Republican Party hierarchy, and its uncanny ability to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory ("Me-Too Republicans," *TAS*, July 1994). Aping the destructive, statist agenda of the Democrats is a particularly stupid and futile strategy for building a governing foundation. On one hand, it merely identifies them with discredited policies, and on the other it gives them no recourse when their opponents steal their rhetorical thunder (how much longer before the Clintonistas are forced to pay royalties to Dan Quayle?) .

As long as the GOP's posture is simply to be Democrats on a diet, they will continue to flounder. Unless and until the GOP pursues policies based on sound principles, e.g., (1) smaller government, (2) lower taxes, and (3) *much* smaller government, it will perform no fundamentally useful function in today's political climate, and, to paraphrase Ronald Reagan, "they, too, will wind up in the trash bin of history." It couldn't happen to a more deserving bunch.

—Donald C. Williams
Clinton, Maryland

Deserter of the Month

I agree strongly that it is important that the American people receive the information necessary to balance out the myopic and astigmatic perspective of the mainstream media; however, I must disagree with your characteristic approach—that of excess exposé.

Certainly a threshold quantity of dirt must be unearthed to move the average American to rightly question their president's character, if for no other reason than to reassess their trust in him in future policies; however, I believe that the magnitude of details that you routinely excavate are in great excess of political indication.

Apparently there is sufficient consumer appetite for this measure of filth, but I would suggest to you that I believe that it is possible to maintain or even expand your readership by judiciously limiting the depth of your coverage of "ugly" details.

Until you change, however, I would request that you immediately terminate my subscription and refund the balance.

—Jack T. Hyder, DVM
Ocean Shores, Washington

Whatever (Oops!)

In your editorial "Houston Democrats" in the August 1994 *American Spectator* you note that Michael Huffington is running against Senator *Barbara* Feinstein in California. Mr. Huffington is a fine fellow and his wife is charming, but I see no hope for him. Only a fusion candidate like George Wilson would stand a chance against such a formidable opponent.

—George D. Waldman
Reading, Massachusetts

Bloody-minded

Maybe if the NEA supported artists who distribute copies of *The American Spectator* in their plays, Congress would cut funding entirely.

—R.A. Schram
Brookfield, Wisconsin

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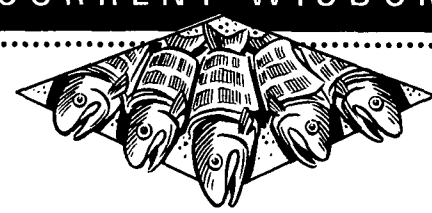

New York Times

Beyond Friedman, beyond Keynes, even beyond Marx—Mrs. Clinton, the "uhless" economist:

A sampling of speeches, supplied by her office, can be preachy. Mrs. Clinton recounts stories of people who were denied care for lack of insurance, including one heartbreaking account of a child who died of meningitis as a result. But she is quite capable of appealing to logic as well. Before the Economic Club of Washington last week, without a prepared text or notes, she gave an almost seamless economic analysis of health care for some 30 minutes, never even pausing for an "uh."

[July 5, 1994]

Parade

The reverend Walter Scott in his authoritative Q&A column injects still more politicized fumes into the *Kultursmog*—and they, alas, are not the politics of WFB:

Q. *On a scale of 1 to 10, how intellectual would you say the conservative commentator William F. Buckley Jr. is? Is he as big a snob as he appears? And does he bat his eyelids for effect, or is it an involuntary reflex?—Eileen Loranger, Bellvue, Wash.*

A. William Francis Buckley Jr., 68, graduated from Yale with honors in 1950, but we'd rate him a 6 at best—since he is as much a performer as an intellectual on his TV show, "Firing Line." As a child, little Bill was considered somewhat obnoxious by his older brothers and sisters, and he had few friends. Today, however, Buckley has pals from all walks of life and political persuasions who insist he's no snob and call him "a regular guy." As for batting the eyelids, his sister Patricia said Bill mimicked many upper-class mannerisms of his beloved father, an ultraconservative oilman, but she didn't mention the eyes. Buckley's assistant said it may be caused by his contact lenses.

[June 19, 1994]

Washington Post

A blurt from columnist Richard Cohen, another suffering victim of Elders Syndrome, a syndrome named for our historic surgeon general and referring to her capacity to speak passable English despite having no brain at all, not even a headache:

More to the point, she [Paula Corbin Jones] waited until the very last minute to file her suit. She did so only after *The American Spectator*, a journal of political pornography, alluded to her in a story about Clinton's allegedly rambunctious extramarital sex life. Pardon me for suspecting that Jones is more interested in clearing—or promoting—her name than in proving she was sexually harassed. To say the least, those are not worthwhile reasons to damage a presidency or to financially bust the Clintons.

[July 1, 1994]

San Francisco Chronicle

Professor Doktor Shelley Diekman, "publicist for the Pacific Film Archive," discourses cogently on "scariness" in film for the enthralled morons who read the arts page of the risible *SFC*:

Scary also can mean empowerment from a feminist point of view, Diekman says.

The woman who gains super-strength in "The Attack of the 50 Ft. Woman" is not at all scary compared to her husband's mistress, Diekman says. As drive-in fare goes it was pure spectacle, but the underlying theme of a wife who overpowers her unfaithful husband can be seen as triumphant, if we ignore all those mangled bodies. "This movie was made in the '50s when the norm was to celebrate women being at home," Diekman says. "But with a little help from outer space, this woman becomes huge and therefore very powerful, and finds a way out of her situation."

[July 2, 1994]

USA Today

In the pages of the 1990s' newspaper of record, an update on developments that could prove to be a communications disaster for Generation X's Caruso:

In the new *Vibe* magazine TAFKAP (The Artist Formerly Known as Prince) answers pop music's million-dollar question: Why on earth did he change his name to an unpronounceable symbol?

"I followed the advice of my spirit," says the man born Prince Rogers Nelson. "I'm not the son of Nell. I don't know who that is, 'Nell's son,' . . . I would wake up nights thinking 'Who am I?'" He also wanted to close the door on Prince The Artist and go in new musical directions, he tells the mag.

So how do you pronounce his new name (a combination of the male and female symbols)? "You don't," he says.

Is that a problem if one wants to address him? "No."

He adds: "I don't mind if people are cynical or make jokes . . . but this is what I choose to be called."

[July 12, 1994]

New York Times Magazine

You've never met a physician like Michael Kinsley:

STAHL: I just want to make the point that we're handling Paula Jones completely differently by really holding back and trying not to jump out of the gate before we know and by saying in almost every story that maybe she isn't telling the truth: let's really look at this.

QUINDLEN: Is that why we're handling the Paula Jones story differently, Jeff?

GREENFIELD: First of all, it would be good to make the point that we ought not to talk about the media monolithically. There's an old joke where a guy says, "Do you want a book for your birthday?" and the other guy says, "No, I already have a book." The American Spectator is not The Washington Times and it's not The New York Times.

KINSLEY: But The Washington Times *is* The American Spectator.

[June 26, 1994]

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Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee

Responding to Senator Lauch Faircloth's despotic suggestion that unemployed residents of public housing perform four hours of community service monthly, the Hon. Senator Carol Moseley-Braun reveals herself as an exuberant champion of the martyred Joe McCarthy:

I would suggest, therefore, that any time we get to the point where the Government dictates that people have to work in order to receive a taxpayer subsidy for housing is something so reminiscent and reflective of communism that I would be stunned that any member of this committee would want to support—(laughter)—such a dictatorial, such a Government intrusion on the time-honored subsidies for home ownership and for residential purposes that our Government allows both to poor people as well as middle-class people. I frankly would oppose the amendment as being too close to the evil empire for me to vote for it. (Laughter.)

[June 27, 1994]

Philadelphia Inquirer

The City of Brotherly Love gets a dose of high culture from Alvin, virtuoso of "bathroom noises":

Composer Alvin Singleton has often used music to make comments on the circumstances of our troubled times. His latest work, *56 Blows (Quis Custodiet Custodies?)*, is his response to the Rodney King beating and the initial acquittals of Los Angeles police officers charged in the assault.

The work, whose subtitle is a Latin epigram that means "Who guards the guardians?" was commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra. It had its first performance under guest conductor David Loebel Thursday night at the Academy of Music.

Those expecting a frenzied, brutal work were likely surprised by the sparse and elegiac nature of Singleton's music. His 12-minute score is sparely notated; it gives prominence to the brass and strings, though its overall textures are thin. It is most compelling during a midsection for solo percussionists that beautifully suggests the sophistications of African drumming.

It opens—weakly, to my mind—with brass instruments, sometimes paired, uttering single tones that sound embarrassingly like bathroom noises. . . . The music begins to take on a haunting quality that may suggest the reflectiveness and compassion the composer hopes this American tragedy will inspire.

[January 15, 1994]

Harvard Magazine

Our unmuzzled vice president, sponsored by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts:

History is a precarious source of lessons. Nevertheless, I am reminded that similar serious economic problems prevailed in Athens in the fourth century B.C., when the philosophical school we now know as Cynicism was born. The Cynics were fed up with their society and its social conventions and wanted everybody to know it. The root of the word cynic is the same as the Greek word for "dog," and some scholars say the Cynics got their name because they barked at society. Sounds almost like some of our talk-radio shows.

[July-August 1994]

Pitch Weekly

In his column in Kansas City, Mo.'s own *Village Voice*, reformed wife-beater albeit lifelong progressive K.C. Wilson assays the state of the culture in his usual prose style, a combination of Dostoevsky, Gide, and Charles Manson:

The beatings I gave her were rooted in the netherworld between those two concepts. In my mind, the "wife-thing" was vaguely supposed to be a combination wet nurse, whore and business partner and psychic enough to know in advance which role I was in need of. When she missed a cue, I'd growl and if she then went blank, I'd accuse her of feigning stupidity just to be uncooperative. It was mostly yelling, screaming and slamming inanimate objects around but if I'd been drinking, she could be in real trouble. In the end, she did the only thing she could have done if she wanted to stay alive.

I should add that I moved back in with her and the kids about a year after she divorced me and we've been living together ever since—PEACEFULLY. The only time the cops have been to our house since the divorce was to tell me that I was being sued by somebody, but that's another story.

The point is, nobody should feel sorry for O.J. Simpson. We're all stuck here living in this sick, male-dominated, misogynistic, war-mongering, indifferent-to-suffering, cesspool of a culture but that's no excuse for beating and killing the women. Other than incest, it's the most destructive thing that can happen to a family.

Because I know God is just, I'm fully confident there's a special hell reserved for guys like O.J. Simpson . . . and me.

[June 30-July 6, 1994]

Justice for All

In a "Message From the Attorney General," delivered to captive Department of Justice employees along with their biweekly pay stubs, Janet Reno upholds the law—Parkinson's law:

As concern about the impact of environmental pollution has grown, there is a widespread belief that minority and low-income populations may bear disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects from pollution. . . . We have made the attainment of environmental justice a priority at the Justice Department, and I am proud to report that the Department is well underway in carrying out the Executive Order. Our first project has been to define the term "environmental justice." For our purposes, environmental justice is a commitment to ensuring that minority and low-income communities do not bear an undue and unacceptable share of environmental risks. The laws and regulations should be applied with equal vigor in Biloxi and Beverly Hills.

In May, nearly 30 attorneys, professors, residents, and other experts came to the Department in a day-long discussion about issues and life experiences involving environmental justice. . . . I have asked Gerald Torres to head a Department-wide team in developing a strategy to fulfill our obligations under the Order and to set a course for this Department to support the attainment of environmental justice in America. The team consists of attorneys from the Civil Rights, Environment, and Civil Divisions; the Office of the Legal Counsel; Office of Legislative Affairs; U.S. Attorneys; the FBI; and the Community Relations Service. In August, the team will produce a strategy stating the specific and coordinated components of the Department's plan, including a time line and workplan. By the end of the year we hope to have a strategy completed, guidelines for line-attorneys published, a comprehensive education program established, and cases for litigation identified. . . .

This process is another visible example of how the Department is refocusing on our responsibilities from the standpoint of our clients and customers. . . . I also hope each of you will elevate awareness of environmental justice in your community, and help your colleagues achieve our goals. You can reach the environmental justice team via e-mail at SMO02 (envjust).

[July 1994]

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More Questions

by Solitary, Poor, Nasty, Brutish & Short

The president's taxpayer-financed counsel, Lloyd Cutler, and his lobbyist-funded private counsel, Robert Bennett, evidently intend to argue that the president is immune from civil suit for his private conduct, at least during his tenure as president. The president's formidable legal team argue that their client is immune during his presidency from civil liability based on private conduct—even conduct that preceded his presidency—because such suits would impose an intolerable burden on the president's time. The president's claim to be the only person in the United States immune to the litigation explosion raises interesting questions that the judge considering this unprecedented assertion will surely wish to consider:

(1) The Constitution explicitly grants a limited form of immunity to members of Congress: they may not be arrested "during attendance at the session of their respective Houses, and in going and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place" (Article 1, Section 6). Although the Supreme Court has held that the president has absolute immunity from liability for presidential decisions, the Constitution nowhere mentions that he is immune from civil suits for his private transgressions. Does the president enjoy an *implied* right of immunity greater than the *explicit* grant of immunity given to members of Congress by the text of the Constitution?

(2) What *is* the legal source of presidential immunity from civil suit? Why has no other president ever claimed such immunity?

(3) Does presidential immunity extend to suits for breach of contract? If so, what if the president fails to raise enough money for Mr. Bennett's $475-per-hour legal fees? Can Mr. Bennett sue to get paid?

(4) If the president cannot be forced to pay his bills, does presidential use of credit cards constitute fraud?

(5) Does the Cutler-Bennett immunity doctrine mean that the president is immune from serving as a witness? May he ignore a subpoena to testify in the defense of Trooper Ferguson? Can he refuse, unlike President Nixon, to surrender his tapes?

(6) Is the president also immune from complying with court orders issued before he became president? Can the president refuse to pay off a mortgage taken out before he took office? Prevent the foreclosure of a vacation home if he doesn't make his monthly payments?

(7) Is the president immune from civil suits brought by the United States? May the president fill in a wetland? Shoot a spotted owl?

(8) Does presidential immunity mean immunity from criminal prosecution? If immunity from civil suit does not mean immunity from criminal prosecution, why is it too much of an inconvenience to respond to Paula Jones's suit, but not too much of an imposition, for example, to defend against criminal charges for complicity in accepting a bribe disguised as a commodities windfall?

(9) Does presidential immunity excuse the president from having to pay taxes? Are some tax audits permissible, but "really burdensome" tax audits constitutionally prohibited?

(10) If the president is immune because all of his time is needed for Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, North Korea, increasing taxes, and proclaiming national holidays, does that mean when the president attends a Barbra Streisand concert, he is shirking his constitutional responsibilities?

(11) Does the vice president enjoy immunity from a civil suit? Does he enjoy such immunity in his role as president of the Senate? Is his immunity limited to acts performed on days when he is breaking a tie vote in the Senate or attending funerals?

(12) The first lady has been held to be a virtual government official. Is she immune from suit as well? Can she sue the president for sexual harassment if Paula Jones cannot? Can the president sue the first lady for spousal abuse?

(13) The president's lawyers argue that if the Jones suit is allowed to go forward, there will be a flood of similar suits filed against the president. Does that mean that the president has engaged in other private conduct for which he expects to be sued?

(14) When Congressman Rostenkowski was indicted, the president stated that "all Americans" have the right to their day in court. By seeking to delay the suit, is the president suggesting that Paula Jones is not an American? And shouldn't the president have his day in court? Shouldn't his day in court be during the twentieth century?

(15) If the president expects to be immune until 2001, should he be required to post a bond so that Paula Jones will be assured that there will be resources from which she can recover when she finally is allowed to proceed? Should the presidential defense fund be required to include funds for Paula Jones's lawyers, or for a fund to pay for a judgment in her favor?

(16) Should Paula Jones be allowed to take depositions to preserve evidence while she awaits her opportunity to pursue her case?

(17) If the president does not have to answer in court to the Jones charges, shouldn't he also be immune from congressional investigations and questions by reporters? Aren't those matters equally distracting?

(18) Should our laws be amended to make it clear to the public that they don't apply to the president? Should the public be put on notice that the president is above the law? Should the president be required to wear a warning label? Should it be a tattoo? What should it say? ❐

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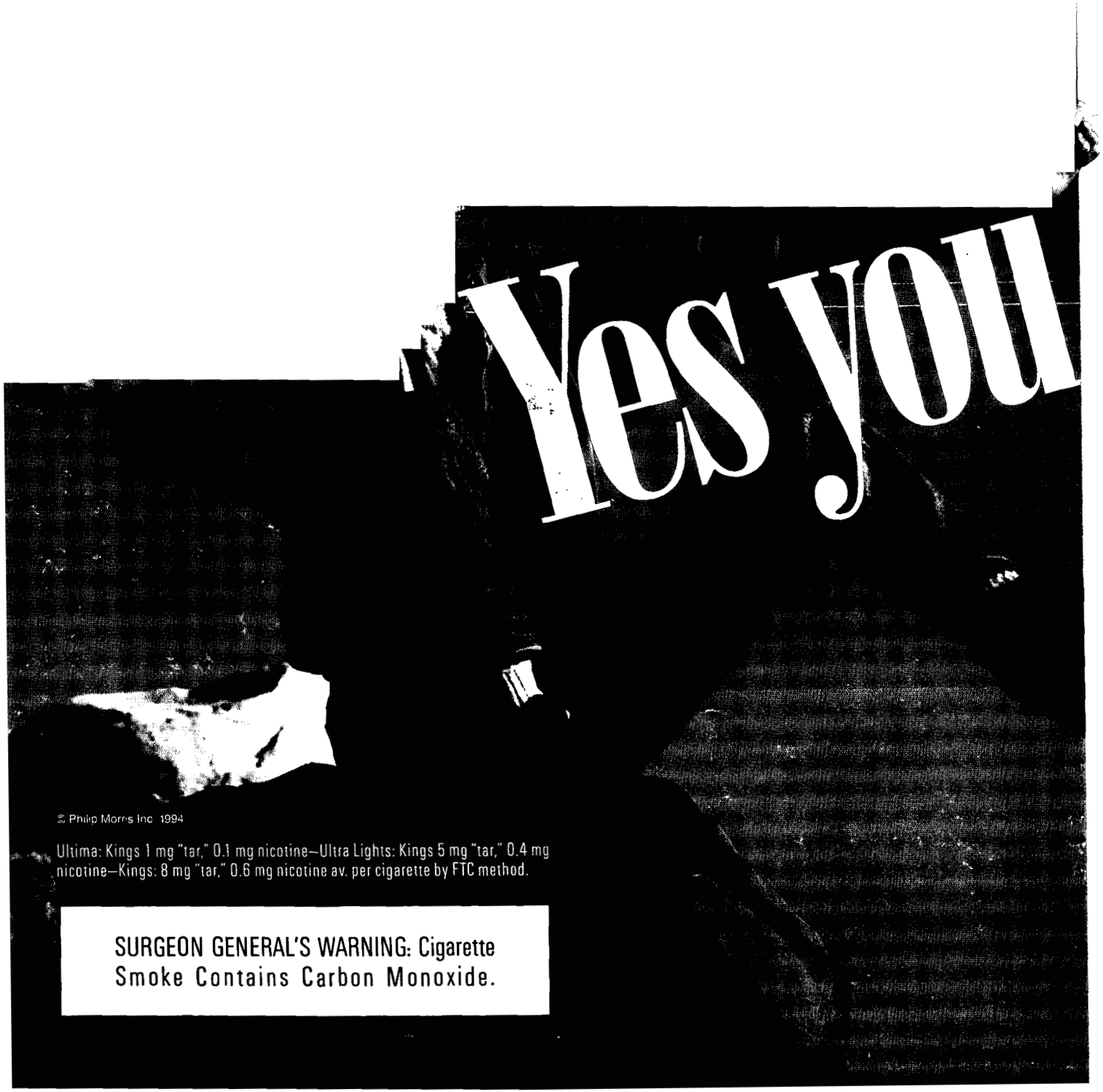

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